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Lytton

The secrets of a Savoyard

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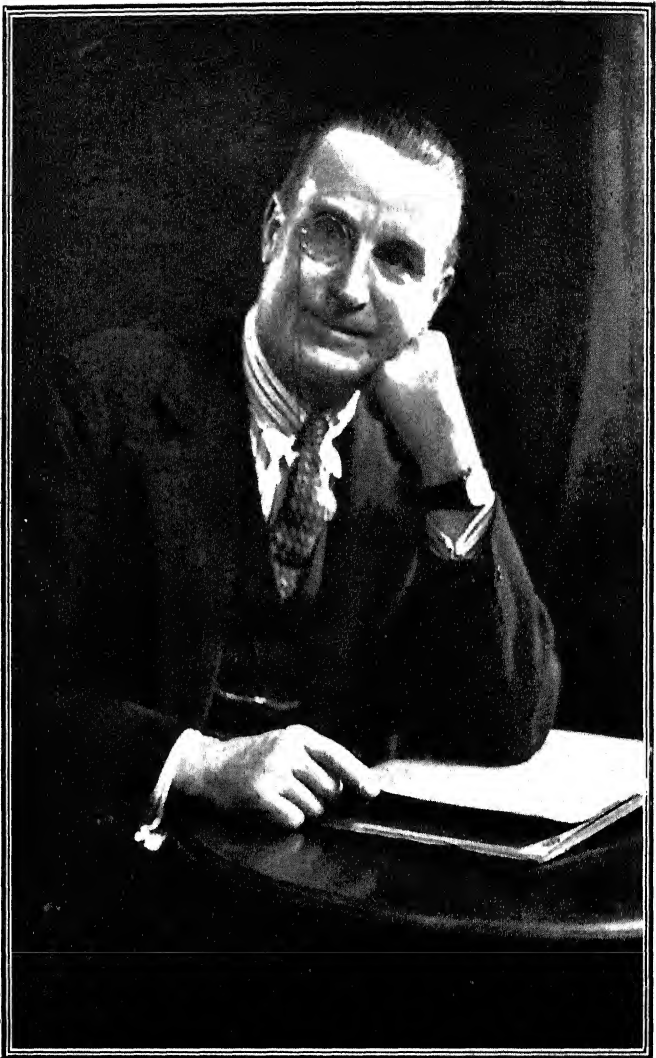
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THE SECRETS OF A SAVOYARD









*Photo by]*

*[Ray, Manchester.*

**Henry A. Lytton.**

*Frontispiece.*

THE SECRETS  
OF  
A SAVOYARD

BY  
HENRY A. LYTON

NEW YORK :  
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY.

*Printed in Great Britain*

## " THE GONDOLIERS "

(After assisting at the first night of the new Gilbert-and-Sullivan revival.)

You may boast of your Georgian birds of song  
And say that never was stuff so strong,  
That its note of genius simply mocks  
At yester-century's feeble crocks,  
And floods the Musical Comedy stage  
With the dazzling art of a peerless age.  
But for delicate grace and dainty wit,  
For words and melody closely knit,  
Your best purveyors of mirth and joy  
Were never in sight of the old Savoy ;  
They never began to compete, poor dears,  
With Gilbert-and-Sullivan's *Gondoliers*.

For me, as an out-of-date Victorian,  
Prehistoric and dinosaurian,  
I hardly feel that I dare reflect  
On the art of the day with disrespect ;  
But if anyone asks me, "Who'll survive—  
The living dead, or the dead alive ?  
Which of the two will be last to go—  
The *Gondoliers* or the latest show ? "  
I wouldn't give much for the latter's chance ;  
That is the view that I advance,  
Trusting the public will bear me out  
( The good from the bad they're quick to sever ) ;  
" Of this I nurse no manner of doubt,  
No probable, possible shadow of doubt,  
No possible doubt whatever."—O. S.

(Reprinted by kind permission of the proprietors of " Punch," and  
of Sir Owen Seaman.)

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## FOREWORD

*There have been many who have great reputations in the Gilbert and Sullivan characters, and have established themselves as favourites with the public who love and follow the operas, and when the roll comes to be written down finally, if ever it is, Henry Lytton undoubtedly will be assigned a foremost place. He has played a wide variety of the parts, and the scope and versatility of his work is unique. It is unlikely that his record as a Gilbert and Sullivan artiste will ever be surpassed.*

*Rupert Dwyer Esq.*



# HENRY A. LYTTON

■ By

## AN ADMIRER OF HIS ART

SINCERELY indeed do I offer my good wishes to my old friend, Henry A. Lytton, on his giving to the world this most interesting book, "The Secrets of a Savoyard."

Lytton represents a distinct type on our musical comedy stage. No other artiste, I think, has quite that gift of wit which makes one not merely a happier, but a better, man for coming under its spell. Its touch is so true and refined and delightful. Somehow we see in him the mirror of ourselves, our whimsicalities, and our little conceits, and could ever a man captivate us so deliciously with the ironies of life or yet chide us so well with a sigh?

Certainly it was fortunate both to him and to us that circumstances, in the romantic manner this book itself describes, first turned his early steps towards Gilbert and Sullivan, and thus opened a career that was to make him one of the greatest, as he is now the last, of the Savoyards. Like the natural humorist he is, he could be and has been a success in ordinary musical comedy rôles, but it is in these wonderful operas that he was bound to find just his right sphere. Lytton in Gilbert and Sullivan is the "true embodiment of everything that is excellent." He was made for these parts, just as they might have been made for him, and no man could have carried into the outer world more of the wholesome charm of the characters he depicts on the stage. He himself tells us on these pages how his own outlook on life has been coloured by his long association with these beautiful plays.

So closely, indeed, is he identified in the public mind with the wistful figure of *Jack Point*, or the highly

susceptible *Lord Chancellor*, or the agile *Ko-ko*, that the thousands of Gilbert and Sullivan worshippers who crowd the theatres know all too little of the man behind the motley, the real Henry A. Lytton. For that reason, I want to speak less about the great actor whom the multitude knows and more about the manner of man that he is to those, relatively few in number, whose privilege it is to own his personal friendship.

Lytton's outstanding quality is his modesty. No "star" could have been less spoilt by the flatteries of success or by those wonderful receptions he receives night after night. Something of the eager, impetuous boy still lingers in the heart of him, and he loves the society of kindred souls who have some good story to tell and then cap it with a better one. But all the while he lives for the operas. Even now, after playing in them for twenty-five years, he is constantly asking himself whether this bit of action, this inflection of the voice, this minor detail of make-up, is right. Can it be improved in keeping with the spirit of genuine artistry? So severe a self-critic is he that he will take nothing for granted nor allow his work to become slipshod because of its very familiarity. If ever there was an enthusiast—and there is much in this book to show that he is as great an enthusiast in private life as he is while in front of the footlights—it is Harry Lytton.

The great enthusiasm of his life is Gilbert and Sullivan. Nobody who reads these reminiscences will have any doubt about that, for it shows itself on every page, and it is such an infectious enthusiasm that even we who love the operas already find ourselves loving them more, and agreeing with Lytton that they must not be tampered with and brought "up-to-date." From Sir William Gilbert's own lips he heard just what the playwright wanted in every detail, and both by his own acting and by his help to younger colleagues on the stage he has worthily and faithfully upheld the traditions of the Savoy. I have been told more than once by members of the company how, when they have felt disheartened for some reason or other, he would come along with some cheery word, some little bit of advice

and encouragement that would make all the difference to them. Often and often he has brightened up the dreary work of rehearsals by his buoyant humour and all-compelling good spirits.

What a happy family must be a company that is led by one who is so entirely free from vanity and petty jealousy and whose one aim is to help the performance along? Lytton is *bound* to have that aim because of his intense loyalty to the operas themselves, but how much springs as well from that inherent kindness of his, which, with that complete lack of affectation, makes him so truly one of Nature's gentlemen. "Each for all and all for each" was the motto of the heart-breaking Commonwealth days, of which he tells us such a pathetic human story here, and it seems to remain his motto now that he has climbed to the top of his profession as the principal of the D'Oyly Carte Company.

Lytton's acting always seems to me in such perfect "poise." It is so refined and spontaneous. Each point receives its full measure, and yet is so free of exaggeration or "clowning." He is, that is to say, an artiste to his finger-tips, and no real artiste, even when he is a humorist, has any place for buffoonery. Like the Gilbert and Sullivan operas themselves, he is always so clean and wholesome and pleasant. The clearness of his enunciation is a gift in itself, and his dancing reminds us of the times when all our dancing was so charming and graceful, and thus so different to what it is to-day. And then his versatility! Could one imagine a contrast so remarkable as that between his characterisation of the ugly, repulsive *King Gama* in "Princess Ida" and the infinitely lovable *Jack Point* in the "Yeomen of the Guard"? Or between his studies of the engaging and more than candid *Lord Chancellor* in "Iolanthe" and that pretentious humbug *Bunthorne* in "Patience"? Or between the endless diversions of his frolicsome *Ko-Ko* in "The Mikado" and the gay perplexities of the sedate old *General Stanley* in "The Pirates of Penzance"?

So one might continue to speak of his quite remarkable gallery of portraits, both in these operas and apart from them, and one might search one's memory in vain for



a part awwhich was not a gem of natural and clever characterisation, rich in humour and unerring in its sympathetic astistry.

Yet no rôle of his, I think, stands out with such fascination in the minds of most of us as does dear *Jack Point*, the nimble-witted Merryman. The poor strolling player, with his honest heart breaking beneath the tinsel of folly is a figure intensely human and intensely appealing, and no less so because of the mingling romance and pathos with which it is played. If Lytton had given us only this part, if he had shown us only in this case how deftly he can win both our laughter and tears, he would have achieved something that would be treasured amongst the tenderest, most fragrant memories of the modern stage.

Long may he remain to delight us in these enchanting operas of the Savoy! By them English comic opera has had an infinite lustre added to it—a lustre that will never be dimmed—and no less surely do the operas themselves owe a little of their evergreen freshness and spirit to the art of Henry A. Lytton.

# THE SECRETS OF A SAVOYARD

## I

### YOUTH AND ROMANCE

*Apologia—Early Misfortunes of Management—Stage Début in Schoolboy Dramatics—St. Mark's, Chelsea—The School's Champion Pugilist—The Sale of Jam-Rolls—Student Days with W. H. Trood—An Artist of Parts—A Fateful Night at the Theatre—The Schoolboy and the Actress—A Firm Hand With a Rival—Three Month's Truancy—Our Marriage and Our Honeymoon in a Hansom—The Dominie and the Married Man—First Engagement with D'Oyly Carte—Dilemma of a Sister and Brother.*

---

EIGHT-AND-THIRTY years on the stage ! Looking back over so long a period, memory runs riot with a thousand remembrances of dark days and brighter, and of times of hardship which, in their own way, were not devoid of happiness. It has been my good fortune to own many valued friendships and it is to my friends that the credit or the guilt, as it may happen to be, of inspiring me to begin this venture belongs. Not once, but many times, I have been asked "Why don't you write your reminiscences, Lytton?" The late Lord Fisher strongly urged me to write them when I paid my last visit to his home a few months before he passed to the Great Beyond. So great was my respect for Lord Fisher, one of the noblest Englishmen of our age, that I felt bound to adopt his suggestion, and it is thus partly in homage to his sterling qualities and gifts that I begin now to reveal these "Secrets of a Savoyard." This much let me say at the very beginning. Naught that is written here will be "set down in malice." Searchers for those too numerous chronicles of scandal will look

here for spicy tit-bits in vain. For what it is worth, this is the record of one who has lived a happy life, whose vocation it has been to minister to the public's enjoyment, and whose outlook has inevitably been happily coloured by such a long association with the gladsome operas of the old Savoy.

I cannot say that my love of the footlights was inherited, but at least it began to show itself at a very early age. One of my earliest recollections is concerned with a little diversion at the village home of my guardian. No doubt my older readers will remember the old gallanty shows which were in vogue some forty or fifty years ago. Explained briefly, these were contrived by use of a number of cardboard figures which, with the aid of a candle, were reflected on to a white sheet, and which could be manipulated to provide one's audience with a rather primitive form of enjoyment. Well, I do not recall where I had been to get the idea, but I decided to have a gallanty show at the bottom of the garden, and to invite the public's patronage. This ranks as my first venture in managerial responsibility. I rigged up a tent—a small and jerry-built contrivance it was—and an announcement of the forthcoming entertainment in my bold schoolboy's hand was pasted on to the outer wall of the garden. The charges for admission were original. Stalls were to be purchased with an apple, lesser seats with a handful of chocolates or nuts, while a few sweets would secure admission to the pit. The boys of the village, having read the notice, turned up and paid their nuts and sweets in accordance with the advertised tariff, but the sad fact has to be related that the show did not please them at all, and by summarily pulling up the pole they brought the tent and the entertainment to grief. In other words, I "got the bird." Nor can I say that was the end of the tragedy. Under threats I had to repay all that

the box-office had taken, and as most of the lads claimed more than they had actually given, the stock of nuts and sweets was insufficient to meet the liabilities. So in the cause of art I found myself thus early in life in bankruptcy! My partner in the enterprise proved to be a broken reed, for when the roughs of the village got busy he showed a clean pair of heels and left me alone with the mob and the wreckage.

Seeing that this is an actor's narrative, I ought to place on record at once that my first appearance on any stage was in schoolboy dramatics in connection with St. Mark's College, Chelsea. Of St. Mark's I shall have much to say. I played the title rôle in "Boots at the Swan." Except that I enjoyed being the cheeky little hotel "Boots" and fancied myself not a little in my striped waistcoat and green apron, I don't remember whether my performance was held to be successful or not, but unconsciously the experience did give me a mental twist towards the stage.

St. Mark's was regarded in those times—and I am glad to know is still regarded—as an excellent school for young gentlemen. But certainly my name was never numbered amongst the brightest education products of that academy. What claim I had to fame was in an entirely different sphere. I was the school's champion pugilist! In those days I simply revelled in fighting. A day without a scrap was a day hardly worth living. Occasionally the older lads thought it good sport to tell the new-comers what an unholy terror they would be up against when they met Lytton. In most cases this was said with such vivid embellishments that the youngsters got a heart-sinking feeling. But there was one lad who was more adroit. He argued that it was all very well for the school champion to fight surrounded by and cheered on by his friends, but that this must put the challenger at a distinct disadvantage. He also considered that

no harm would be done if he measured up this much-boomed light-weight before the time came for him to stand up publicly as his antagonist. Luring me, therefore, into a quiet corner one day, he commanded me in so many words to "put 'em up." Now while it is the privilege of a champion to name his own time and conditions, it really was too much to tolerate the pretensions of such an impudent upstart. So we set to in earnest, and very speedily the new boy was giving me some of his best—a straight left timed to the moment—and it needed only two such lefts to make me oblivious of time altogether. Certainly he succeeded in instilling into my mind a decided respect for his prowess.

Not being too richly endowed with pocket money, I conceived the idea that to set up in business as the school pastrycook would serve a "long-felt want." Strictly cash terms were demanded. Each day I bought a number of rolls at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each and a pot of jam for  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. With these I retailed slices of most appetising bread and jam at a penny a time and made an excellent profit. If the truth must be told the smaller boys got no more than a smear of jam on their bread and the bigger boys rather more than their share, but on the average it worked out fairly well, and the juniors had sufficient discretion not to complain.

If I had any bent in those days—apart from fighting and selling jam rolls—it was in the direction of painting. For water-colour sketches I had a certain aptitude, and painting remains one of my hobbies, taking only second place to my enthusiasm for golf. For tuition I went to W. H. Trood at his studio in Chelsea. Trood in his time was an artist of parts. He had a fine sense of composition and painted many beautiful pictures. If he had been deaf and dumb he would have made a great actor, for his gift of facial expression was extraordinary. Club men



Henry A. Lytton  
at the age of 21.



are familiar with a well-known set of five action photographs representing a convivial card-player who had gone "nap." Trood was the subject of those photographs.

For some time I attended St. Mark's during the day and went to the studio each evening. I realised very early that there was no money in painting and that it was of little use as a profession. We students were a merry band, and though we had little money we made the most of what we had to spend. Our studio was only a garret, and it was a common thing for each of us to buy a tough steak for no more than fourpence, grill it with a fork over the meagre fire, and make it serve as our one substantial meal for many hours. It was a Bohemian existence and I have remained a Bohemian ever since.

Trood and I were more than master and pupil. We were, if not brothers, then at least uncle and nephew. From time to time we contrived to visit the theatre, for although he could not hear, he loved to study the colour effects on the stage, and had an uncanny talent for following the course of the plot. And one of these nights out was destined to be most fateful for me in my future career. We had gone together into the gallery at the Avenue Theatre (now the Playhouse). The attraction was a French opera-bouffe called "Olivette." And I must confess that my susceptible heart was at once smitten with the charms of a young lady who was playing one of the subsidiary parts. From that moment the play to me was *not* the thing. Eyes and thoughts were concentrated on that slim, winsome little figure, and I remember that at school the following day the sale of jam rolls was pushed with redoubled vigour in order that I might have the wherewithal to go to the theatre and see my charmer again.

I am getting on delicate ground, but the story is well worth the telling. It was clear I could not go on



worshipping my fair divinity afar from the "gods." We must make each other's acquaintance. So to Miss Louie Henri I addressed a most courteous note, paying her some exquisite compliments, and inviting her to meet her unknown admirer at the stage door after the performance one night. And my invitation was accepted. I ought to mention here that I was then scarcely seventeen years of age. Louie Henri, as it afterwards transpired, was the same.

Well, I bedecked myself in my best and marched off in good time to the trysting place at the stage door. I spent my last sou on a fine box of chocolates. Nothing I could do was to be left undone to make the conquest complete. But first there came a surprise. Another St. Mark's boy was at the stage door already. He, too, had a box of chocolates, and it was bigger than mine.

"Who are those for?" I demanded. The tone of my voice must have been forbidding. I already had my suspicions.

"Louie Henri," answered the lad. Seemingly he thought it wise to be truthful.

I had a rival! Crises of this kind have to be met with vigour and thoroughness.

"Give them to me," I insisted, "and hook it." The command was terrible in its severity. More than that, I was not the school's champion light-weight for nothing. The rival almost threw the chocolates into my hands and vanished like lightning. When Louie came out, there I was with a double load of offerings! She was sensibly impressed.

From time to time further delightful meetings took place. Luckily the jam roll trade was flourishing, and so it was seldom the youthful swain met his lady-love empty-handed. Only once did the rival attempt to steal a march on me again. I discovered him loitering round the stage door, but when he saw my fists in a

business-like attitude he apparently realised that discretion was the better part of valour, and bolted into the night. All of which proves anew that "faint heart never won fair lady."

Louie and I got on famously together, and although we were but children it was not long before we had decided to become engaged. The course of true love was complicated by the fact that while I was at St. Mark's in the daytime she at night had to play her part in "Olivette." So it occurred to me that the only thing was to give up school. I accordingly wrote a letter in my guardian's name, saying that I was being taken away from St. Mark's for a three-months' holiday, and posted it to the headmaster at Chelsea. Then followed the rapture of sweetheart days. Our pleasures were few—there were no funds for more than an occasional ride on a 'bus—but into the intimacies of those blissful times there is no need to enter.

We were married late in 1883 at St. Mary's, Kensington. Louie and I certainly never realised the responsibilities of married life, and love's young dream was not spoiled by anxious reflections about the problem of ways and means, as may be gathered from the fact that our funds were exhausted on the very day of the marriage. I remember that, after the fees at church had been paid, the cash at our disposal amounted to eighteen pence. The question then was how far this would take us in the matter of a honeymoon. Strolling into Kensington Gardens we decided that we would spend it on the thrills of a ride in a hansom-cab, and the driver was instructed to take us as far as he could for eighteen pence. The journey was not at all long. I rather think that if the cabby had known the romantic and adventurous couple he had picked up as fares he would have been sport enough to give us a more generous trip.

Our plan of action after this honeymoon in a hansom

had already been decided upon. My wife went to the theatre for the evening performance. I, on my part, had arranged to go back to school and put the best face on things that was possible. During my absence, of course, it had become known that my guardian's letter was a deception and that my three months' care-free existence was truancy. Where I had been the headmaster did not know. What I had done he knew even less. But the delinquency was one which, in the interest of school discipline, had to be visited with extreme severity. The Dominie took me before the class and commenced to use the birch with well-applied vigour.

When at the mature age of seventeen one is made a public exhibition of one can have a very acute sense of injured dignity. The rod descended heavily.

"Stop it!" I shouted. "You can't thrash me like this. Do you know what you are doing? *You're thrashing a married man!*"

"*You* a married man! You lie!" The birching, bad as it had been, was redoubled in intensity. The master declared that he would teach me a lesson for lying.

"But I *am* a married man," I yelled. "I was married yesterday."

But even the dawn of truth meant no reprieve. The explanation put the offence in a still more lurid light. It was bad enough to tell a lie, but a good deal worse to get married, and the headmaster whacked me all the more severely as an awful example to the rest of the boys.

Following the thrashing, I enjoyed a fleeting notoriety in the eyes of my school mates, who crowded round to see the interesting matrimonial specimen. "Look who's married!" they shouted. "What's it like?" I'm afraid at the moment that, smarting under the

rod, the joys of married life seemed to me to be, as Mark Twain would say, "greatly exaggerated." And worse was to come. Next day the master, considering my knowledge of life made me too black a reprobate to remain in his school any longer, terminated my career as a pupil. For a married man to be in one of the lower classes was too much of an absurdity.

Here was a pretty how-d'ye-do ! A bridegroom in sad disgrace, and finding himself on the day after his marriage with no work, no prospects, no anything ! Louie it was who came to the rescue. "Princess Ida" had just been produced at the Savoy, and she had been engaged for chorus work in the company which was being sent out on a provincial tour, commencing at Glasgow. My wife contrived to see Mr. Carte, and she faithfully followed the strategy that had been decided upon. Seeing that theatrical managers were understood to dislike married couples in companies on tour, she was to ask him whether he would engage her brother for the tour, pointing out that he had a good voice and was "fairly good looking." The upshot was that I was commanded to wait on Mr. Carte. Later in life I came to know him well and to receive many a kindness from him, but this first interview remains in my mind to this day, because it was destined to put my foot on the first rung of the theatrical ladder.

"Not much of a voice," was the conductor's comment—not a very flattering compliment, by the way, to one who had been for a long time solo boy in the choir of St. Philip's, Kensington. "Never mind," replied Mr. Carte ; "he will do as understudy for David Fisher as *King Gama*." And as chorister and understudy I was engaged. Each of us was to have £2 a week, and in view of our circumstances, the money was not merely welcome, but princely. Our troubles seemed to have vanished for ever.

One of our difficulties was that, having entered the company as brother and sister, that pretty fiction had to be kept up, and for a devoted newly-married couple that was not very easy. For a brother my attentiveness was almost amusing. The rôle was also sometimes embarrassing. Louie's charms quickly captivated a member of the company who afterwards rose very high in the profession—it would hardly be fair to give his identity away!—and one night he gave me a broad hint that my dutiful watchfulness was carried too far. "Leave her to me," he whispered, affably. When I told him I had promised mother I would not leave her, or some such story, a compromise was arranged, whereby, after the show, when we were going home, I should drop back and give him the opportunity for playing the "gallant." To have refused would have aroused suspicions that might have led to the discovery of our secret. So like *Jack Point*, I had to walk behind while the other fellow escorted my bride and paid her pretty compliments. It seemed less of a joke at the time than it does to-day.

Naturally, the little bubble was bound to explode before long, and it exploded when everything seemed to be going splendidly. It happened when one of the assistant managers, who also admired my wife, somehow induced us to invite him to visit our "digs."

"Nice rooms, these," he commented, taking them in at a glance. "What do you pay?"

"Sixteen shillings."

"Only sixteen shillings? Three rooms for sixteen shillings!"

"No! Only two——" The fatal slip! Truth at last had to out.

We told him that we had been afraid that, if we had said we were man and wife, we should not have got the

engagement, and we were in too much of a dilemma to be sticklers for accuracy. Our "marriage lines" were then and there produced.

"Well," said the manager, "you *are* remarkably alike; no wonder you easily passed for brother and sister." That, in fact, was true. Our marriage, he went on to tell us, would not have been a handicap in the D'Oyly Carte Company. Most managers, he said, did not care for husband and wife to travel together, but that was not the case with Mr. D'Oyly Carte.

The news quickly spread through the company, and on every hand we received congratulations. Only one of our colleagues considered that he had a grievance. He was the usurper who had insisted that I should allow him to escort my alleged sister from the theatre to our lodgings. "What a fool you've made of me," he complained. "Why I was going to propose! I did think she would make such a nice little wife!"

Long after this it was Mr. Carte's custom, when making enquiries as to my wife, to say dryly, "And how's your sister, Lytton?" Similarly, whenever he spoke to my wife, there was invariably a twinkle in his eye whenever he asked after the welfare and whereabouts of her "brother."

## II

### VAGABONDAGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

*£ s. d. on Tour—The Search for Independence—The Old Showman of Shepherd's Bush—Not the " Carte " I Wanted—The Commonwealth—Our Repertory and Our Creditors—" Well, Mr. Bundle"—A Thirsty Situation and a Melodramatic Finale—A Stammerer's Story—Comradeship in Adversity—Roaming the Country—Back in London and the Search for Work—Diverse Occupations and Little Pay—A Savoy Engagement at Last—Understudy to Grossmith—A Real Opportunity.*

---

THE "Princess Ida" tour, as I have said, opened at Glasgow. It ran for about a year, with enthusiasm and success wherever the company played, though unluckily for me, my services as understudy were never required. The D'Oyly Carte companies then, as now, were always a happy family, the members of which were always helpful to one another and always remarkably free from those petty jealousies that distinguish some ranks of the profession.

Looking back on those romantic times, my wife and I often marvel how, with all our inexperience in house-keeping, our slender finances withstood the strain of our extravagance. Whenever we moved on to a new town we had the usual fears as to what sort of a landlady we were to get. In these times landladies do not always look on actors as their legitimate "prey." But then they were extortioners, though there were, of course, some pleasant exceptions. I remember for instance, that in some places we were charged 5s. a week for potatoes, and in others only 6d. On the whole, on

that tour, we must have been in luck. Notwithstanding that we had lived fairly well—and we did indulge odd tastes for luxuries—we found that at the end of the 52 weeks' engagement we had saved £52.

Following the "Princess Ida" tour, we were sent out into the provinces again with other productions, and in this way we served under the Gilbert and Sullivan banner for the best part of two years. But they were not continuous engagements. From time to time we would find ourselves idle and our tiny resources steadily dwindling. Luckily, during this period we always managed to secure a fresh engagement before we had spent our last sovereign, though we were hardly as fortunate in the dark days that were coming.

I remember receiving at this time the advice of a dear old friend, a Mr. Chevasse, of Wolverhampton. "The turning-point in your career," he said to me, "will come when you have got 'independence.'" "What," I asked him, "do you mean by that?" "Get £100 in the bank," was his answer, "and in your case that will bring the sense of independence, and you will know that at last you are beginning to shape your career yourself. Save everything you can. Save a shilling a week, or two shillings a week, but save, whatever happens." And he was right. Later, when I had that £100 stored away, I found myself in a position that enabled me to assert my claim for principal parts, and I was sent out into the provinces to take three leading rôles—*Ko-Ko*, *Jack Point*, and *Sir Joseph Porter*.

But this is anticipating my story. Before that time came there were dark days to pass through, days when we did not know where the next meal would come from, and days when we tramped the country as strolling players, footsore and weary. When our modest savings had been exhausted during one prolonged period of "resting," I remember being driven by sheer necessity



to apply for an engagement at the booth of an old showman at Shepherd's Bush. I had to do something. So I walked up to the showman, who was standing outside the tent in a prosperous-looking coat with an astrakhan collar, and asked him for a job. What did I want to do? I wanted, I told him, to be an actor, and would play anything from melodrama to low comedy.

"All right," said the showman. "Go over there and wash that cart!"

I went "over there" and started the washing. But it was no use. Sorry as things were with us, I just could not come down to that, and off I bolted. That was not the sort of "*Carle*" I wanted.

Our next venture was very interesting. It brought us no fame, precious little money, a great deal of hardship, and yet a host of pleasant remembrances to look back upon in the brighter days. "We were seven" and one and all down on our luck. Failing to obtain any engagements in town we decided to band ourselves together as fellow-unfortunates, and to seek what fortune there was as entertainers in the villages and small towns of Surrey. It was to be a Commonwealth. Whatever profits there were made were to be divided equally. One week this division enabled us to take 7s. 10d. each! That was the record. What ill-success our efforts had was certainly not due to any want of "booming." The services of a bill-poster were obviously prohibitive. So at the dead of night we used to put our night-shirts over our clothes to save these from damage, creep out into the streets with our paste-bucket and brush, and fix our playbills to any convenient hoarding or building. It had to be done in double-quick time, but we had spied out the land beforehand, and generally we made sure that our notices were pasted where they would prominently catch the public eye.

Our repertory consisted of a striking drama entitled "All for Her," a touching comedy called "Masters and Servants," and an operetta known as "Tom Tug the Waterman." In addition, we did songs and dances, and as it happened these were the best feature of the programme. We had no capital available to spend on dresses and scenery. What we did was to take some ramshackle hall or barn, and then to make a brave show with our posters, though the printer was often lucky if he got more than free tickets for all his family to see our performance. Generally our creditors considered that, as there was small chance of getting any money from us, they might as well have an evening out for nothing. Our costumes were improvised from our ordinary attire. The men figured as society swells by using white paper to represent spats or by tucking in their waistcoats and using more white paper to indicate that they were in immaculate "evening dress." Leather boots could be made to look like the best patent with the aid of varnish. As to scenery all we had was our own crude drawings in crayons and pencil.

We presented our plays by what is known as "winging." By that I mean that only one manuscript copy of the play was usually available, and each player had to get an idea of the lines which he or she had to speak after each entrance, though the actual words used on the stage were mainly extemporised. "Winging," even when one has theatrical experience behind one, is not at all easy. I know that in "Tom Tug" I dreaded the very thought of having to go on and make what should have been a long speech designed to give the audience a more or less intelligent idea of the plot. I was so uncertain about it that I took the book on with me in the hope of getting furtive glimpses at it as we went along.

"Well, Mr. Bundle," I began.

"Well?" Mr. Bundle responded.

"Well," I stammered again.

"Well?"

"Well."

The next "Well" did not come from the stage; it came from the audience. "Well?" it yelled, accompanied, so to speak, by a tremendous note of interrogation. "Well?" it echoed again. "Say *something*, can't you?"

This was too much. In confusion I rushed off the stage. Even that was not all. I should, as I have said, have outlined the course of the story, but not only did I not do this but in my confusion I left behind me the book of words on which we were all depending. From the others in the wings there came anguished whispers. "Where's the book?" "You've left the book on the table!" So I had to put the best face on things and walked on to get it. But the audience had had enough of me that night. "Get off" they shouted—and I did.

"Tom Tug" was also once the occasion of a painful fiasco. Instead of dashing on to the stage where my wife was playing the part of a simple fisher-girl, and greeting her like the jolly sailor-man I was, with a boisterous "Here I am my darling," I found myself, standing behind her in such a state of stage-fright that I was absolutely "dried up." I could not utter a word. I simply stood behind her, limp, speechless and motionless, and no amount of prompting would induce me to go on with the wooing. So there was nothing for it but to ring down the curtain, and for the rest of the evening we had songs and dances, with which we made amends.

"All for Her" was a drama of a desert island that should have melted hearts of stone. We were all dying of thirst (at least, according to the plot). Nowhere on

that desert island was water to be found. They sent me out to explore for it while they rolled about the stage moaning and groaning in agony. During my absence from the stage I sat near a fire-bucket in the wings. Then came my cue to reappear.

I staggered on famished and weary. The quest had been in vain. "Not a drop," I croaked in a parched dry voice; "not a drop of water anywhere."

"Liar!" screamed the audience in unison. Our audiences, as you will have gathered, were often critical folk who could sit with dry eyes through our most anguishing scenes. It transpired that while I was sitting near that fire-bucket the bottom of my Arab cloak had dipped into the water and there it was dripping dripping, dripping right across the stage! The dramatic situation was absolutely spoilt.

The company included, besides my wife and myself, a young actress named Emmeline Huxley, who after these hard times with us went to America and there undoubtedly "made good." Then there was a "character" whom we called "'Oppy." He was the general utility man who acted as conductor and orchestra rolled into one, and then went behind the scenes to play the cornet, to act as stage adviser, or at a pinch to take a small part. He was an enthusiast who was here, there and everywhere. "'Oppy," in addition to having a wall eye and a club foot, had a decided impediment in his speech, but, strangely enough, he was entirely unconscious of this disability. For that reason we often used to induce him to tell his story of the lady who sang "Home, Sweet Home."

This story is bound to lose some of its effect when put into cold print. As "Oppy" told it the humour was irresistible. "Sh-sh-she wan-wan-*ted* to go on the sta-sta-sta-stage," he used to say, "and the man-an-an-ager he sa-a-a-aid to her, 'Wh-wh-wh-what can you

sing ? ' And she said, ' Ho-ho-ho-home, Sw-we-we-we-weet Ho-ho-home.' And he told her to sing-sing-sing it. And (here he could not keep a straight face over the poor lady's misfortunes) she-she-she couldn't sing-sing-sing it for-for-for stam-stam-stam-stam-stam-mering."

Never did " 'Oppy " tell this story, of the ridiculousness of the telling of which he seemed entirely unconscious, without his hearers exploding with laughter. " Wh-what makes you all lau-lau-laugh so ? " he used to ask, incredulously. " You lau-lau-lau-lau-laugh altogether to-to-to-too hearty. It's a good-good-good-yarn, but I'm dam-dam-dam-damned if it's as fun-fun-fun-funny as that."

Once he received an unexpected windfall in the shape of a postal order from a relative for two or three shillings. " Come and have a little dinner with me to-morrow," he said to me and my wife. " I know you're hungry," When we arrived we found his plate was already on the table and empty. He apologised profoundly. He had been too hungry to wait for us and had already eaten his dinner. So while my wife and I each enjoyed a chop—the first square meal we had had for many a day—he sat by and kept us entertained. Splendid fellow ! Little did we guess that as he did so he was suffering the pangs of hunger accentuated by the sight of our satisfaction. Next day the landlady confided to us the fact that as our friend's windfall had been insufficient to provide chops and vegetables for three, he had smeared his plate with the gravy from the chops we were to have, and then made us believe that he had satisfied his hunger already.

What became of him later on I have never discovered. I only know that I have tried hard to find him in order that that noble act of self-denial might be in some generous manner repaid. Neither inquiries nor advertisements, however, have ever revealed his whereabouts to

me, and it may be that already this honest fellow had gone to receive his reward. God rest his soul!

Then there was Arthur Hendon. If ever a Christian lived it was that sterling fellow. Time after time in those heart-aching days we were on the verge of despair. Luck was dead out. Life was a misery. But Hendon, though he was as sore of heart and as hungry as the rest of us, was always ready with some cheery word, some act of kindness, some "goodness done by stealth." Louie and I were rather small in size, and often as we tramped from one place to another he carried one of us in turn in his arms. For we had little food, and were tired, footsore and "beat." And he, too, was "done." Only his great heart sustained him in those terrible times as our "captain courageous."

The Commonwealth venture lasted for about three months altogether. As I have shown it was one continual struggle against adversity and poverty. For some time we were located at Aldershot. Our show ran as a rule from six to eleven o'clock, and for want of better amusement the soldiers gave us a fair amount of patronage at threepence a head. If we did not please them they did not hesitate to fling the dregs of their pint pots on to the stage. One night we felt ourselves highly honoured by the presence of a number of military officers at our performance. "All for Her," I am glad to say, went without a hitch on that gala occasion. Our "theatre" was an outhouse owned by a publican, who was very considerate towards us in the matter of rent, because he found that our presence meant good business for his bar-parlour receipts.

From Aldershot we went on to Farnham, and from there to other hamlets where we believed there was an audience, however uncouth and untutored, to be gathered together. Eventually we reached Guildford. By then matters were getting desperate. The Mayor, or some

other local public man, heard of our plight. He drove out to where we were playing, witnessed part of our performance, and engaged us to sing at a garden-party. I remember that, exhausted as we were, gratitude enabled us to give of our very best, as the only return we could make for his kindness. He told us it was a great pity that such clever people should be living a precarious existence in the country villages, and offered to pay our train fares to London in addition to the fee for the engagement we had fulfilled. This generosity we accepted with alacrity. The next morning we were back in town again—each to follow his or her different way. So ended the vagabondage of the Commonwealth. It was an experience which none of us was ever likely to forget.

Once more in London it would be idle to say that our troubles had disappeared. It meant the dreary search again for employment. Mr. D'Oyly Carte had no immediate vacancies. Other managers had nothing more to offer than promises. Lucky is the actor—if he ever existed—who throughout his career has been free from this compulsory idleness. During this period I had to turn my hand to all sorts of things. Once I called at a draper's shop and secured casual work as a bill distributor. I had to go from door to door in a certain select part of Kensington. I remember I looked at those gilded walls and those red-carpeted stairs with a good deal of envy. Later on I was destined to visit some of those very houses and walk up those same red-carpeted stairs as a guest—those very houses at which, to earn an odd shilling or so to buy bread, I had delivered those bills! Yes; and there was one house at which I called in those humble days where they abruptly opened the door, showed me a ferocious-looking dog with the most business-like teeth, and significantly commanded me to "get off—and quick!" I had done nothing wrong, and my body and my heart were aching.



Sir W. S. Gilbert.





Years afterwards I became a breeder of bull-dogs—about that you shall hear later on—and sold one of them to those very people. And, as if in poetic justice, that bull-dog bit them!

My training under Trood was turned to advantage during these empty days. A fashion had just set in for plaques. I painted some scores of these terra-cotta miniatures, and although it was not remunerative work, it served to put bare necessities into the pantry. We were living about that time in Stamford Street, off the Waterloo Road, and in those days it was a terrible neighbourhood, where one's sleep was often disturbed by cries of "murder" and "police." Our baby's cradle was a travelling basket—we could not afford anything better. I remember, in connection with those plaques, that in after years I was dining at the house of a well-known writer and critic, and he showed me with keen admiration two beautiful plaques, which, he said, had been won by Miss Jessie Bond in a raffle at the Savoy. She had made a present of them to him. "Yes," I commented, "and I painted them." He was kind enough to say that that enhanced their value to him considerably.

For a time I went into a works where they made dies for armorial bearings. Here I had to do a good deal of tracing, and the work was fairly interesting. I drew five shillings the first week—hardly an imposing stipend for a family man—but the second week it was ten shillings and the third twenty shillings. Singing at occasional smoking concerts and running errands supplemented this money very acceptably. The job at the die-sinkers might have continued, but the foreman wanted me to clean the floors in addition to doing my artistic work, and at that my dignity revolted. I left.

Some months went by in this flitting from one job into another, but it is useless to attempt a full catalogue

of my versatility, for it is neither impressive nor very inspiring. During all this hand-to-mouth existence I was calling on theatrical managers. Slender as the rewards which the stage had thus far given me were—just a meagre livelihood and precious little encouragement—the call to return to it remained insistent and strong. Sooner or later I was bound to return, and whether it were to be to good fortune or ill, the very hope buoyed me up. I had worried Mr. Carte with ceaseless importunity. Every week at least I went round to try and see him on the off-chance of an engagement. And at last there came the turn of the tide.

It happened on the eve of the first London production of "Ruddigore." Concerning this new opera, the producers had for good reasons maintained an air of secrecy, and the unfolding of the mystery was thus awaited with more than usual public curiosity. It was the talk of the town and the subject of many skittish references in the newspapers. Calling once again at Mr. Carte's office, I caught him, after a long wait, just leaving his room and hurrying along a corridor. Without more ado I buttonholed him and asked him once again for an engagement. Mr. Carte was not a man who liked that sort of conduct. "You should not interrupt me like this," he said, in a tone that betrayed his annoyance. "You ought to send up your name." Explaining that I had done so and had been told he was out of town, I repeated my plea for an engagement. Hurrying on his way Mr. Carte told me to go down to the stage. Success had come at last! When Mr. Carte sent a man to the stage that man became *ipso facto* a member of the company. Later the news came through that Mr. Carte had chosen me as understudy to Mr. George Grossmith as *Robin Oakapple*. This was indeed a slice of good fortune. Understudy to Mr. George Grossmith!

“Ruddigore” was produced for the first time on Tuesday, the 22nd January, 1887, at the Savoy. Towards the end of that week Grossmith was taken seriously ill with peritonitis. By an effort he was able to continue playing until the Saturday. Then he collapsed and was taken home for a serious operation. Upon the Monday morning I was told I was to play his part—and play it that very night.

Chosen to step into the shoes of the great George Grossmith! Faced with such an ordeal to-day I verily believe I should shirk it. But then, the audacity of youth was to carry me through. The supreme chance had come. At all costs it had to be grasped.

### III

#### CLIMBING THE LADDER

*The "Ruddigore" Success—Congratulations from Everyone—My First Meeting with Grossmith—Gilbert's Advice to a Beginner—Irving's Wonderful Acting and its Effect—Speaking to the Man in the Gallery—The Mystery of Jack Point—How My Tragic Ending Was Introduced—Gilbert's Approval—A Memorable Hanley Compliment—Laughter I ought not to have had—Bunthorne's Fall—Accidents, Happy and Otherwise—Ko-Ko's Mobiles Too—Not a Mechanical Trick—The Myth of the Poor Old Man of Seventy—Still Youthful in Spirit and Years.*

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THE Savoy Theatre had its usual large and fashionable audience on that Monday night when I was to play my first big principal part either in or out of London. What my sensations were it would be hard to describe. Nervous I certainly was, and in the front of the house my wife was sitting wondering, wondering whether the stage-fright fiasco in "All for Her" was going to be repeated in this critical performance of "Ruddigore." Both of us knew that here was my great opportunity. If I won the future was assured. If I lost——! I knew the dialogue, and I knew the songs, but during the previous week there had been all too little chance for me to study Grossmith's conception of the part from the "wings."

Then my cue came and I went on. The silence of the audience was deathly. They gave me not the slightest welcome. The great Grossmith, the lion comique of his day, was not playing! *Oakapple* was being taken by an unknown stripling! No wonder they were disappointed and chilling. First I had a

few lines to speak, and then I had a beautiful little duet with Miss Leonora Braham, who was playing *Rose Maybud*. And when that duet, "Poor Little Man," was over, and we had responded to the calls for an encore, all my tremors and hesitation had gone. I knew things were all right. With every number the audience grew more and more hearty. The applause when the curtain fell was to me unforgettable. It betokened a triumph.

Behind the scenes the principals and the choristers almost mobbed me with congratulations. Up in my dressing-room there were many further compliments. Sir (then Mr.) William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan came to see me together. I heard afterwards that they had been very anxious about the performance. Gilbert, as he shook me by the hand, declared "To-night there is no need for the Lyttons to turn in their graves." Mr. Carte, though always a man of few words, gave me to understand that he realised that his confidence in me had not been misplaced. Cellier, who had occupied the conductor's seat, told me that "From to-night you will never look back." He and I remained fast friends for life.

The second act was no less successful. Since then I have come to know how wonderful receptions can be, but never did applause fall more gratefully than when as a young man, under the first ordeal of a terrible test, I was making that first appearance at the Savoy. Late as it is, I should like to thank any who were there and who read these lines for that sympathy and encouragement. It gave me confidence in myself and helped me along. For every young artist who comes for the first time before the footlights, may I bespeak always the same kindly feeling? It does mean so much. The Press, to whom my debt has always been great, also said many nice things about that performance. "Carte

and Company, it must be admitted," said one leading paper, "are wonderful people for finding out hitherto unexploited talent."

Although George Grossmith was at first not expected to live, he made an amazingly rapid recovery, and in about three weeks he was able to resume his part in "Ruddigore." One of the first things he did was to send for me. "Gee-Gee," as the older generation remembers, was in his day a veritable prince of comedians, and in the theatre he was always paid the deference due to a prince. Outside his dressing-room a factotum was always on duty. None dare think of entering without permission. Thus, when I, a mere member of the chorus, was summoned there into the great man's presence, it was regarded by the company as an event, and everyone wanted to know what it was like! Grossmith told me he had heard of my success, gave me a signed copy of his photograph as a memento and thus laid the foundation of a friendship that was destined to grow very intimate during the coming years.

Grossmith was a man of brilliant accomplishments and, as an artiste in facial expression and in wistful fancy, perhaps we have not seen his equal. Shortly after he left the Gilbert and Sullivan operas he went on tour with a repertory of charming songs he had himself composed, and in that venture he made a good deal of money. For a reason theatre-goers will understand—the desire to avoid becoming a pale imitation of a man playing the same part as oneself—I was never a spectator "in front" when he was in the cast at the Savoy.

Connected with my "Ruddigore" success I was proud to become the recipient from Gilbert of a gold-mounted walking-stick that is still one of my most treasured possessions, and the letter accompanying this gift it may be well to reproduce:—

" 39, Harrington Gardens,  
 " South Kensington,  
 " 22nd February, '87.

" MY DEAR SIR,—

" Will you do me the favour to accept the accompanying walking-stick as a token of my appreciation of your excellent performance of the part of *Robin Oakapple*, undertaken, as it was, at a very few hours' notice, and without any adequate rehearsal.

" Faithfully yours,  
 " W. S. GILBERT.

" H. A. Henri, Esq."

Let me explain here that, in consequence of the "brother and sister" deception, when I joined the D'Oyly Carte organisation just after my marriage, I adopted my wife's name and was known as H. A. Henri during the early part of my career. It was on Gilbert's own suggestion that I made the change.

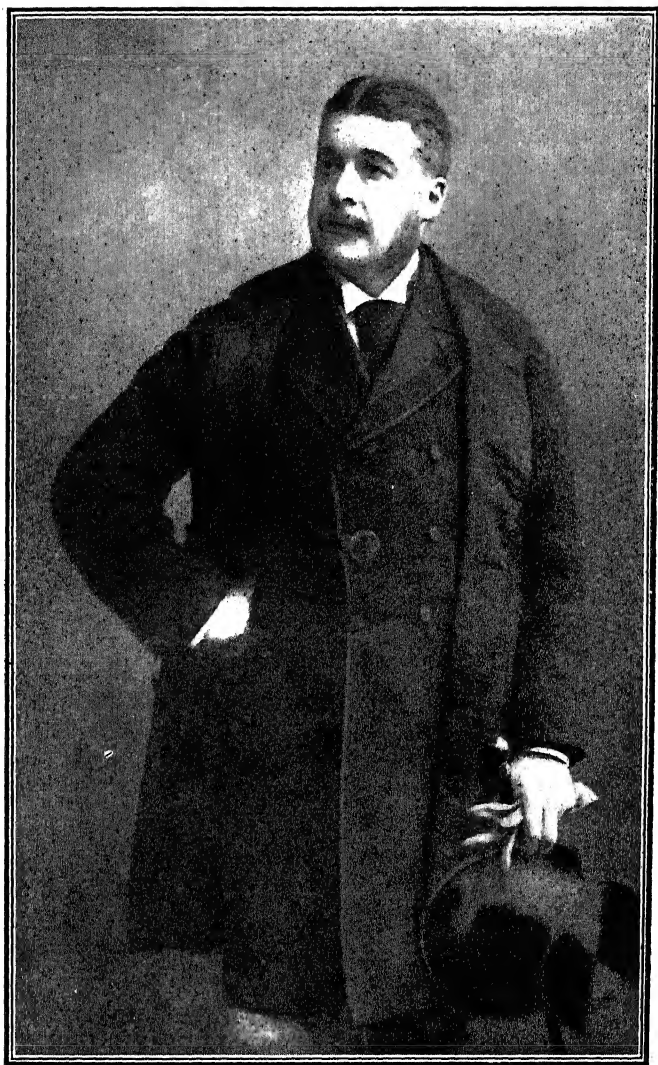
It was true, as Gilbert said, that I had no adequate rehearsal when I was bidden to step at short notice into George Grossmith's shoes, but during the next few weeks it was my good fortune to be under the playwright's personal coaching. Subsequently I shall have to tell many reminiscences of Gilbert, who in after years gave me the privilege of being both his friend and confidant, but at this moment I want to refer to advice he gave me while "putting me through my paces" in "Ruddigore." In my anxiety I was rather hurrying the speech I was supposed to address to the picture gallery of my ancestors. He pulled me up.

"Let me tell you something, young man," he began. "That speech, 'Oh! my forefathers!' is now a short speech, but originally it consisted of three pages of closely-written manuscript. I condensed and condensed. Every word I could I removed until it was of the length



you find it to-day. Each word that is left serves some purpose—there is not one word too many. So when you know that it took me three months to perfect that one speech, I am sure you will not hurry it. Try to remember that throughout your career in these operas.” Later on he also gave me this sound counsel, “Always leave a little to the audience’s imagination. Leave it to them to see and enjoy the point of a joke. I am sure you are intelligent,” he went on to say, “but, believe me, there are many in the audience who are more intelligent than you!”

Now, if an actor in these operas has to be careful of one thing above everything else, it is that of avoiding forcing a point. Gilbert’s wit is so neat and so beautifully phrased that it would be utterly spoilt by buffoonery. The lines must be declaimed in deadly seriousness just as if the actor believes absolutely in the fanciful and extravagant thing he is saying. I can think of no better illustration of this than the scene in “*Iolanthe*” where *Strephon* rejects recourse to the Chancery Court and says his code of conduct is regulated only by “Nature’s Acts of Parliament.” The *Lord Chancellor* then talks about the absurdity of “an affidavit from a thunderstorm or a few words on oath from a heavy shower.” What a typical Gilbertian fancy! Well, you know how the “comic” man would say that, how he would whip up his coat collar and shiver at the suggestion of rain and how he would do his poor best to make it sound and look “funny.” And the result would be that he would kill the wittiness of the lines by burlesque. The *Lord Chancellor* says the words as if he believed an affidavit from a thunderstorm was at least a possibility, and the suggestion that he does think it possible makes the very idea, in the audience’s mind, more whimsical still. Imagine, again, in “*Patience*” how the entire point would be lost if



Sir Arthur Sullivan.



*Bunthorne* acted as if he himself saw the absurdity of his poem "Oh! Hollow, Hollow, Hollow!" *Grosvenor*, in the same opera, is intensely serious when he laments sadly that his fatal beauty stands between him and happiness. If he were not, the delightful drollery of the piece would, of course, be destroyed.

Gilbert, by the way, gave me two other hints which should be useful to those just beginning their careers in the theatre, and they are hints which even older actors may study with profit. He held that it was most important that the artiste who was speaking and the artiste who was being addressed should always be well to the front of the stage. "If you are too far back," he said to me, "you not only lose grip over the audience, but you also lose the power of clear and effective speech." Then there is that old trouble—nearly every novice is conscious of it—as to what one should do with one's hands when on the stage. Somehow they do seem so much in the way, and one does feel one ought to do something with them, though what that something should be is always a problem. I mentioned this matter to Gilbert. "Cut them off at the wrists, Lytton," was his quick reply, "and forget you've got any hands!" Every young professional and young amateur should remember this. So long as one worries about one's hands or one's fingers, one is very liable to be nervous and to do something wrong, and so the only sound rule to follow is to forget them entirely.

For a good reason I am going to digress here to tell a story of Sir Henry Irving. It was my good fortune once to be in the wings at the Lyceum when he was playing *Shylock* in the "Merchant of Venice." The power of his acting upon me that day was extraordinary. Every word I listened to intently until at last, in the trial scene, he had taken out his knife to cut the pound

of flesh. I knew, of course, that he was never really going to cut that pound of flesh, but the sharpening of the knife, the dramatic gleam in the great tragedian's eyes, the tenseness of the whole situation, was all too vivid and all too like reality. I hated the sight of bloodshed, and in the shock of anticipation, I fainted.

When I came round I was in the green room, and a little later, amongst those who came to see me, was Irving himself. I was deadly white, and if the truth must be told, rather ashamed. But Irving was immensely pleased. He took it as a compliment to the force of his acting. Learning that I was a young actor, he declared that my emotionalism was a good omen, and said that my sensitive and highly-strung nature would help me in my work enormously. Then he went on to give me many hints that should be valuable to every aspirant for success on the stage. One hint I have never forgotten. "See to it," he said, "that you always imagine that in the theatre you have a pal who could not afford the stalls, and who is in the back of the pit or the gallery. Let him hear every line you have to say. It will make you finish your words distinctly and correctly."

If it is true, as friends have often told me, that one of the chief merits of my work is the clearness of my elocution in all parts of the house, it is due to the advice given to me in those early days by two of the greatest figures connected with the stage, Gilbert and Irving. Seeing that these operas are now being played by hundreds of amateur societies each year, I want to pass on to those who perform in them this golden rule: Always pitch your voice to reach the man listening from the furthest part of the building. Since Gilbert's death I have often had the feeling that someone is still intently listening to me—someone a long way away!

But now I must proceed with my story. When

George Grossmith returned to the caste, I was sent out as a principal in one of the provincial companies, and in this work continued for years. Sometimes we played one opera only on tour—the opera most recently produced in town—and sometimes a number of them in repertory. It was towards the end of 1888 that I first played what is, I need hardly say, the favourite of all my parts, *Jack Point*, in the “Yeomen of the Guard,” the opera which was Gilbert and Sullivan’s immediate successor to “Ruddigore.” And in connection with this part let us finally clear up a “mystery.” It has been a frequent source of enquiry and even controversy in the newspapers.

When at the close of “Yeomen” *Elsie* is wedded to *Fairfax*, does *Jack Point* die of a broken heart, or does he merely swoon away? That question is often asked, and it is a matter on which, of course, the real pathos of the play depends. The facts are these. Gilbert had conceived and written a tragic ending, but Grossmith, who created the part, and for whom in a sense it was written, was essentially the accepted wit and laughter-maker of his day, and thus it had to be arranged that the opera should have a definitely humorous ending. He himself knew and told Gilbert that, however he finished it, the audience would laugh. The London public regarded him as, what in truth he was, a great jester. If he had tried to be serious they would have refused to take him seriously. *Whatever* Grossmith did the audience would laugh, and the manner in which he did fall down at the end was, indeed, irresistibly funny.

So it came about that while he was playing *Jack Point* in his way in London I was playing him in my way in the provinces. The first time I introduced my version of the part was at Bath. For some time I had considered how poignant would be the effect if the poor

strolling player, robbed of the love of a lady, forsaken by his friends, should gently kiss the edge of her garment, make the sign of his blessing, and then fall over, not senseless, but—dead! I had told the stage manager about my new ending. From time to time he asked me when I was going to do it, and then when at last I did feel inspired to play this tragic dénouement, what he did was to wire immediately to Mr. Carte: "Lytton impossible for *Point*. What shall I do?"

I ought to explain that any departure from tradition in the performance of these operas was strictly prohibited by the management. Thus, while I might demur to the implication that my work was impossible, the fact that he should report me to headquarters was only consistent with his duty. But the sequel was hardly what he expected. The very next day Mr. Carte, unknown to me at the time, came down to Bath. He watched the performance and, after the show, the company were assembled on the stage in order that, in accordance with custom, he could express any criticisms or bestow his approval. What happened seemed to me to be characteristic of this great man's remarkable tact. He first told us that he had enjoyed the performance. "For rehearsals to-morrow," he went on, "I shall want Mr. So-and-so, Mr. So-and-so, Miss So-and-so, Miss So-and-so," and several others. The inference was that there were details in their work that needed correcting. Then he turned to me, shook me most warmly by the hand, and just said very cordially, "Good night, Lytton." And then he left. No "Excellent"—that might have let down the stage manager's authority—but at the same time no condemnation. It was all non-committal, but it suggested to me, as it actually transpired was the case, that he was anything but displeased with my reading.

Gilbert and I, when we had become close friends,

often had long talks about this opera, and particularly about my interpretation of the lovable Merryman. I told him what had led me to attempt this conception, and asked him whether he wished me to continue it, or whether it should be modified in any particular way. "No," was his reply; "keep on like that. It is just what I want. *Jack Point* should die and the end of the opera should be a tragedy."

For the sake of fairness I must mention that a fortnight before I had introduced this version of the part, another popular artiste, who was out with one of the other provincial companies, played the rôle in just the same way. It was entirely a coincidence. Neither of us knew that the other had evolved in his mind precisely the same idea, even down to the minutest details, and still less had either of us seen the other play it.

One little detail in this part may be worth recording. Whenever kings or noblemen in the old days were pleased with their jesters they threw them a ring. For that reason I invariably wear a ring when I appear as *Jack Point*. Simple ornament as it is, it was once owned by Edmund Kean and worn by him on the stage, and another treasured relic of the great tragedian that I possess is a snuff-box, also given to me by my old friend, Charles Brookfield.

One of the finest compliments ever paid to me as an artiste occurred at Hanley. We were playing "Yeomen." Many of our audience that night were a rough lot of fellows, some of whom even sat in their shirt sleeves, but there could be no question but that they were keenly following the play. Everywhere we had been on that tour there had been tremendous calls after the curtain. At Hanley when the curtain fell there was—a dead silence! It was quite uncanny. What had happened? Were they so little moved by the closing scene of the piece that they were going out in indifference



or in disgust? Gently we drew the edge of the curtain aside, and there, would you believe it, we saw those honest fellows silently creeping out without even a whisper. He was *dead*. *Jack Point* was *dead*!

I changed in silence myself. The effect of the incident had been so extraordinary. And when I went down to the stage door a crowd of these rough men were waiting. Somehow they knew me for *Point*. "Here he is!" they shouted. "Are you all right, mister, now?" Then, as I walked on, they turned to one another and I overheard one of them say: "He *wasn't* dead, after all." As they saw the end of the opera they verily believed something had gone wrong. Such a thing in the theatre may possibly be understandable, but that the illusion should have lingered after the curtain had dropped, and even after they had left the theatre and come really to earth in the street, seemed to me extraordinary.

The "Yeomen of the Guard" was staged again the following night, but this time the audience must have been told by their pals that they had actually seen me afterwards, and that it was "only a play." *Jack* didn't die—not really. It was only "pretended."

That Hanley audience rather overdrew the gravity of things. Some audiences, on the other hand, go to the opposite extreme and they have their biggest laugh when and where I least expect it. I remember once playing the *Pirate King* in the "Pirates of Penzance," and as a result of a slip (a physical one) I was the sorry figure in one of those incidents which I might catalogue as "laughs I ought not to have got." I had to come in, armed to the teeth, high up on the stage. By some mischance I slipped down the rocks, and encumbered with all those knives, pistols and cutlasses about me it was a pretty bad drop. The audience, of course, thought my undignified entrance a capital joke. I didn't—it hurt. But I turned the mishap to account, first picking up a

dagger and putting it between my teeth, then groping round for the other weapons, and all the while cowering my pirate swashbucklers with a vicious look that suggested "Come on at your peril; I'm ready." That incident was not in the book.

Lovers of "Patience" will recall that little diversion where *Lady Jane* picks up *Bunthorne* in her arms and carries him off. Well, when Miss Bertha Lewis was playing with me in this scene quite recently, she did something quite unauthorised. She dropped me—it was a terrible crash—and the audience thought it a "scream." In the shelter of the wings I remonstrated with her, pointing out that this was a distinct departure from what Gilbert intended. All the sympathy I got was, "Well, I've dropped you only twice in eight years!" Scarcely an effectual embrocation for bruises!

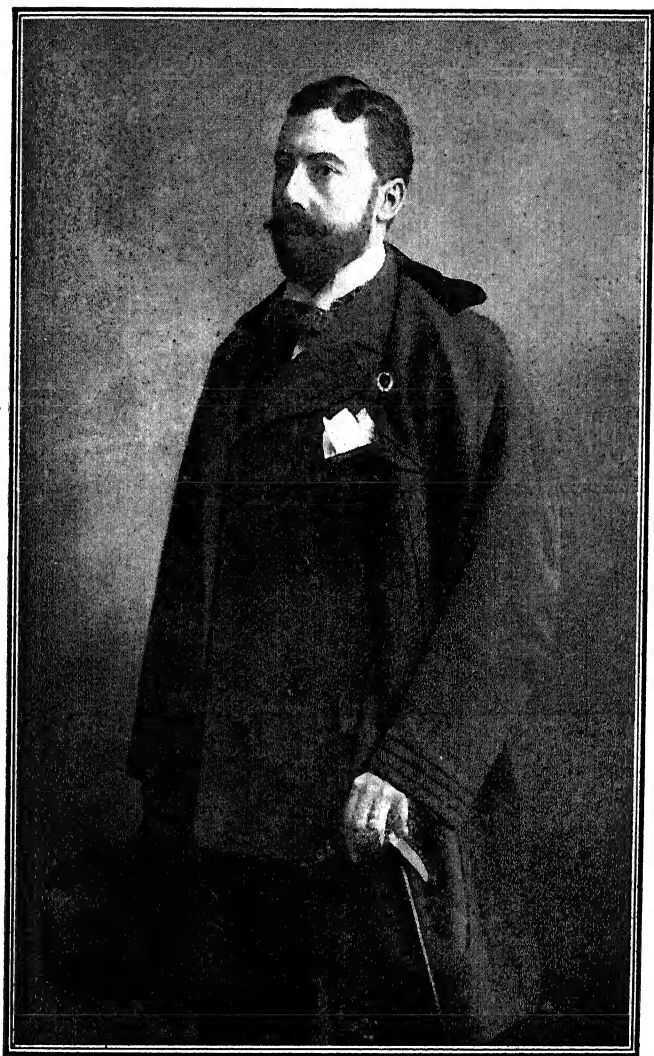
When we were doing "Ruddigore" in Birmingham, some years ago, I broke my ankle in the dance with which the first curtain fell. Somehow I finished the performance, but when I went up to my dressing-room to change I fainted. When I came to I found that my foot had swollen enormously, that the top boot I was wearing had burst, and that they were doing their best to cut it away. The speediest medical aid to be found was that of a veterinary surgeon, and although the pain was awful it was nothing like the feeling of doom when I overheard him saying, "He may not walk again!" Luckily his fears were altogether unfounded, but although the accident has not affected my dancing, the ankle has never been quite right to this day.

Once, in the "Yeomen" I kicked one of the posts near the executioner's block. It dislocated my toe, but what a happy accident it was I did not realise until some weeks later, when we were playing "The Mikado," and when I was doing the dance in the "Flowers that Bloom in the Spring," I trod upon a tin-tack, and

instinctively drew my toe away, as it were, from the pain. From the audience there came a tremendous roar of laughter. For a moment I could not understand it at all. Looking down, however, I was amazed to find that big toe upright, almost at right angles to the rest of the foot. With my fan I pressed it down—then raised it again. This provoked so much merriment among the audience that I did it a second time, and a third. All this time the theatre was convulsed. I confess that to myself it seemed jolly funny. Here, indeed, was a quaint discovery.

This "toe" business has ever since been one of *Ko-Ko's* greatest mirth-provokers in the "Flowers that Bloom in the Spring." The explanation of its origin shows that it is not a trick mechanical toe nor, as some people suppose, that it is done with a piece of string. The fact is simply that the toe is double-jointed.

Now that I have made a brief reference to dancing, I think it may be well to correct a legend which has grown up about my age, and which usually turns up when we have been encored a first or a second time for a dance, or some boisterous number, especially in "Iolanthe" or "The Mikado." "Isn't it a shame?" I know some dear kind friends say, "making him do it again. Poor old man! He's well over seventy." Others declare, "Isn't he a marvel for sixty-five?" Well, if a man is as old as he feels, then my age must still be in the thirties, and certainly there is no intention on my part of retiring just yet. But if we have to go by the calendar, and if it is necessary that there should be "no possible shadow of doubt" in the future as to my age, I had better put on record the fact that I was born in London on January 3rd, 1867. The rest, a small matter of arithmetic, may be left to you. At all events I am still some distance from the patriarchal span.



Richard D'Oyly Carte.



The stage is a wonderful tonic in keeping one healthy and strong. Not once, but many times, I have gone to the theatre in the evening suffering from neuralgia, but the moment my cue comes the pain has entirely disappeared. No sooner, worse luck, have I finished for the night than it has returned !

## IV

### LEADERS OF THE SAVOY

*Memories of Gilbert—His Instinct for Stagecraft—Stories of Rehearsals—Jack Point's Unanswered Conundrum—The Craze for the Up-to-Date—Gilbert's Experiments on a Miniature Stage—Nanki-Poo's Address—The Japanese Colony at Knightsbridge—The Geniality of Sullivan—A Magician of the Orchestra—The Cause of an Unhappy Separation—Only a Carpet—Impressions of D'Oyly Carte—Merited Rebukes and Generous Praise—D'Oyly Carte and I Rehearse a Love Scene—A Wonderful Business Woman—Mrs. Carte's Part in the Savoy Successes—Our Leader to-day.*

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SIR WILLIAM GILBERT I shall always regard as a pattern of the fine old English gentleman. Of that breed we have only too few survivors to-day. Some who know him superficially have pictured him as a martinet, but while this may have been true of him under the stress of his theatrical work, it fails to do justice to the innate gentleness and courtesy which were his great and distinguishing qualities. Upright and honourable himself, one could never imagine that he could ever do a mean, ungenerous action to anyone, nor had any man a truer genius for friendship.

Gilbert, it is true, had sometimes a satirical tongue, but these little shafts of ridicule of his seldom left any sting. The *bons mots* credited to him are innumerable, but while many may be authentic there are others that are legendary. He was a devoted lover of the classics, and to this may be attributed his command of such beautiful English. Nimble-witted as he was, he would spend days in shaping and re-shaping some witty fancy into phrases that satisfied his meticulous taste, and days and weeks would be given to polishing and re-polishing some lyrical gem. But when a new opera

was due for rehearsal, the libretto was all finished and copied, and everything was in readiness.

Few men have had so rare an instinct for stage-craft. Few men could approach him in such perfect technique of the footlights. Up at Grim's Dyke, his beautiful home near Harrow, he had a wonderful miniature stage at which he would work, arranging just where every character should enter, where he or she should stand or move after this number and that, and when and where eventually he or she should disappear. For each character he had a coloured block, and there were similar devices, of course, for the chorus. Thus when he came down for rehearsals, he had everything in his mind's eye already, and he insisted that every detail should be carried out just as he had planned. "Your first entrance will be here," he would say, "and your second entrance there. 'Spurn not the nobly born' will be sung by *Tolloller* just there, and while he sings it *Mountararat* will stand there, *Phyllis* there," and so on.

When the company had become familiar with the broader outlines of the piece, he would concentrate attention upon the effects upon the audience that could be attained only by the aid of facial expression, gesture and ensemble arrangement. Not only did he lay down his wishes, but he insisted that they must be implicitly obeyed, and a principal who had not reached perfection in the part he was taking would be coached again and again. I remember once that, in one of those moods of weariness and dullness that occasionally steal over one at rehearsals, I did not grasp something he had been telling me, and I was indiscreet enough to blurt out, "But I haven't done that before, Sir William." "No," was his reply, "but I have." The rebuke to my dullness went home! It was Durward Lely, I think, whom he told once to sit down "in a pensive fashion." Lely thereupon unmindfully sat down rather heavily—



and disturbed an elaborate piece of scenery. "No No!" was Gilbert's comment, "I said pensively, not ex-pensively." That quickness of wit was very typical.

George Grossmith once suggested that the introduction of certain business would make the audience laugh. Gilbert was quite unsympathetic. "Yes!" he responded in his driest vein, "but so they would if you sat down on a pork pie!" Grossmith it was, too, who had become so wearied practising a certain gesture that I heard him declare he "had rehearsed this confounded business until I feel a perfect fool." "Ah! so now we can talk on equal terms!" was the playwright's instant retort. And the next moment he administered another rebuke. "I beg your pardon," said the comedian, rather bored, in reference to some instructions he had not quite understood. "I accept the apology," was the reply. "Now let's get on with the rehearsal."

You will remember that in "The Yeomen" poor *Jack Point* puts his riddle, "Why is a cook's brainpan like an overwound clock?" The Lieutenant interposes abruptly with "A truce to this fooling," and the poor Merry-man saunters off exclaiming "Just my luck: my best conundrum wasted." Like many in the audience, I have often wondered what the answer to that conundrum is, and one day I put a question about it to Gilbert. With a smile he said he couldn't tell me then, but he would leave me the answer in his will. I'm sorry to say that it was not found there—maybe because there was really no answer to the riddle, or perhaps because he had forgotten to bequeath to the world this interesting legacy.

Sir William not only studied the entrances and exits beforehand, but he came with clean-cut ideas as to the colour schemes which would produce the best effect in the scenery, laid down the methods with which the lighting was to be handled, and arranged that no heavy

dresses had to be worn by those who had dances to perform. No alterations of any kind could be made without his authority, and thus it comes about that the operas as presented to-day are just as he left them, without the change of a word, and long may they so remain !

I ought, perhaps, to answer criticisms which are often laid against me when, as *Ko-Ko* in "The Mikado," I do not follow the text by saying that *Nanki-Poo's* address is "Knightsbridge." I admit I substitute the name of some locality more familiar to the audience before whom we are playing. Well, it is not generally known that Knightsbridge is named in the opera because, just before it was written, a small Japanese colony had settled in that inner suburb of London, and a very great deal of curiosity the appearance of those little people in their native costumes aroused in the Metropolis. Gilbert, therefore, in his search for "local colour" for his forthcoming opera, had not to travel to Tokio, but found it almost on his own doorstep near his home, then in South Kensington. A Japanese male-dancer and a Geisha, moreover, were allowed to come from the colony to teach the company how to run or dance in tiny steps with their toes turned in, how to spread or snap their fans to indicate annoyance or delight, and how to arrange their hair and line their faces in order to introduce the Oriental touch into their "make-up." This realism was very effective, and it had a great deal to do with the instantaneous success of what is still regarded as the Gilbert and Sullivan masterpiece.

But to return to the point about Knightsbridge. When "The Mikado" was produced at the Savoy, the significance of the reference to a London audience was obvious and amusing enough, but it was a different matter when the opera was sent into the provinces. Gilbert accordingly gave instructions that the place

was to be localised, and there was and always is something very diverting to, say, a Liverpool audience in the unexpected announcement that *Nanki-Poo*, the great Mikado's son, is living at "Wigan." In the case of Manchester it might be "Oldham" or in that of Birmingham "Small Heath." What I want to make clear is that, so far from any liberty being taken on my part, this little variation is fully authorised, and it is the only instance of the kind in the whole of the operas.

Sir Arthur Sullivan I knew least of the famous triumvirate at the Savoy. I was under him, of course, at rehearsals, and we had pleasant little talks from time to time, but my relations with him were neither so frequent nor so intimate as they were with the other two partners. We had a mutual friend in Francosi Cellier, about whose work as conductor I shall have more to say, and it was through him that I learned much about the fine personal and musical qualities of the composer.

Certainly Sullivan was a great man, intensely devoted to his art, and fame and fortune never spoilt a man less. A warm-hearted Irishman, he was always ready to do a good turn for anyone, and it was wonderful how the geniality of his nature was never clouded by almost life-long physical suffering. Sullivan lived and died a bachelor, and I believe there was never a more affectionate tie than that which existed between him and his mother, a very witty old lady, and one who took an exceptional pride in her son's accomplishments. Nor is it generally known that he took upon himself all the obligations for the welfare and upbringing of his dead brother's family. It was to Herbert Sullivan, his favourite nephew, that his fortune was bequeathed.

Of Sullivan the musician I cannot very well speak. I have already owned that I have little real musical knowledge. But at the same time he always seemed to me to be something of a magician. Not only could he

play an instrument, but he knew exactly what any instrument could be made to do to introduce some delightful quaint effect into the general orchestral design. "No! No!" he would say at a rehearsal to the double bass, "I don't want it like that. I want a lazy, drawn-out sound like this." And, taking the bow in his fingers, he would produce some deliciously droll effect from the strings. "Oh, no! not that way," he would say to the flutes, and a flute being handed up to him, he would show how the notes on the score were to be made lightsome and caressing. Then it would be the turn of the violins. Nearly all the accompaniments to solos Sir Arthur would expect the orchestra to play *pianissimo*. I was at a band rehearsal once, when we all thought they had carried out his wishes; not so Sir Arthur—"Thank you very much gentlemen, we will now have it again, but this time *pianissimo*——"

One violin player ventured the remark, "Shall we mute it, sir?"—"No," was Sir Arthur's quick retort, "an artiste does not require a mute—so now be both."

At the earlier rehearsals it was often difficult for the principals to get the tune of their songs. The stumbling block was the trickiness of rhythm which was one of the composer's greatest gifts. Now, although I cannot read a line of music, my sense of rhythm has always been very strong, and this has helped me enormously both in my songs and my dancing. Once when Sir Arthur was rehearsing us, and we simply could not get our songs right, I asked him to "la la" the rhythm to me, and I then got the measure so well that he exclaimed "That's splendid Lytton. If you're not a musician, I wish there were others, too, who were not."

One story about Sullivan—I admit it is not a new one—well deserves telling. Standing one night at the back of the dress-circle, he commenced in a contemplative fashion to hum the melody of a song that was

being rendered on the stage. "Look here," declared a sensitive old gentleman, turning round sharply to the composer, "I've paid my money to hear Sullivan's music—not yours." And whenever Sir Arthur told this story against himself he always confessed that he well deserved the rebuke.

Gilbert and Sullivan were collaborators for exactly twenty-five years. It was in 1871 that they wrote "*Thespis*," a very funny little piece of its kind that was produced at the Gaiety, and it was this success that induced Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte to invite them to associate again in the writing of a curtain-raiser destined to be known as "*Trial by Jury*." From that time until 1889 they worked in double harness without a break, and it was in that latter year, after the most successful production of "*The Gondoliers*," that there came the unfortunate "separation." It lasted four years. When, in 1893, the two men re-united their talents, they gave us that delightfully funny play, "*Utopia Limited*." But with "*The Grand Duke*" in 1896—and the superstitious will not overlook that this was the thirteenth piece they had written together—the curtain finally came down upon the partnership.

It may be expected of me that I should say something about the cause of the famous "separation." It is a matter I should prefer to ignore, partly because the consequences of it were so very unfortunate to the cause of dramatic and musical art, and partly because the reason of it was trivial to a degree. Slight "tiffs" there may have been between the two from time to time—that was inevitable under the strain of rehearsals—but these minor differences were mended within a day or a night. What caused the rift was—would you believe it?—a carpet! This Mr. Carte, who under the contract was responsible for furnishings, had bought for £140, as a means of adding to the comfort, as he



Rupert D'Oyly Carte.



believed, of the patrons of the Savoy. Seeing this item in the accounts, Mr. Gilbert objected to it as a sheer waste of money, arguing that it would not bring an extra sixpence into the exchequer. The dispute was a mere "breeze" to begin with, but Gilbert and Carte had each a will of his own, and soon the "breeze" had developed into a "gale." And that miserable carpet led at last to the break-up of the partnership.

Sullivan, whether he agreed with the purchase or not, did his best to put an end to the quarrel, but, as in the end he had to adhere to one side or the other, he linked himself with Mr. Carte. This, then, was the sole cause of the breach, and by none was it more regretted than by the principals. Gilbert, I know, felt this severance from his old friend very acutely, though in our many talks in after years he was always inclined to be a little reticent as to this subject. Sullivan, too, though he went on composing, was not at all fortunate in his choice of lyrical writers, none of whom had the deftness and quaint turn of fancy of the playwright with whom he had worked so long and so successfully.

Before I leave Sullivan, I think students of music will be interested to hear what Cellier once told me as to the composer's methods in writing his beautiful songs. With Gilbert's words before him, he set out first to decide, not what should be the tune, but the rhythm. It was this method of finding exactly what metre best suited the sentiment of the lyric that gave his music such originality. Later, having decided what the rhythm should be, he went on to sketch out the melody, but it was seldom that he set to work on the orchestration until the rehearsals were well under way. In the meanwhile the principals practised their songs to an accompaniment which he vamped on the piano-forte. Sullivan, who could score very quickly, had a mind running riot with musical ideas, and he could



always pick out the idea for a given number that fitted it like the proverbial glove. "I have a song to sing O!" he regarded, I have been told, as the most difficult conundrum Gilbert ever set him, and musicians tell me that, in sheer constructive ingenuity, it is one of the cleverest numbers in the "Yeomen of the Guard."

Now I must turn to Mr. D'Oyly Carte. From time to time in this book I have given indications as to the manner of man that he was, but although much is known about his capacity as a business manager, the world knows very little indeed of his kindly generosity. It was impossible, of course, for him to take into the company every poor actor who was down on his luck, but certain it is that he never sent him empty away. Seldom did he leave his office without seeing that his pockets were well laden with sovereigns. Out in the Strand, as he knew, there would be some waif of our profession waiting for him, always sure that under cover of a handshake, Mr. Carte would press a golden coin upon him with a cheery "See you get yourself a good lunch," or "a good supper."

Mr. Carte, as I have said before, was a man of few words and of a rather taciturn humour, but it would be wrong to think that he was not fond of his joke. First, however, let me tell the story of a small youthful folly of mine, in "The Mikado." It happened in the second act where *Ko-Ko*, *Pooch Bah* and *Pitti Sing* are prostrate on the floor in the presence of the *Emperor*. We three had to do our well-known "roll-over" act in which I, like *Pitti Sing* herself, had to bear the weight of the 20-stone of dear old Fred Billington. Well, an imp of mischief led me one night to conceal a bladder under my costume, and when Fred rolled over it exploded with a terrible "bang." Billington had the fright of his life. "What's happened Harry?" he whispered anxiously, his nose still to the floor, "What have I done?"

I am afraid that in those days I had an incurable weakness for practical joking. One night I went for dinner into a well-known hotel in the Strand. Soon after I had entered the restaurant I was roughly grasped by one would-be diner, who was obviously in a very bad temper, and who demanded to know why no one had been to take the order for himself and his guests. Well, if I was to be mistaken for a waiter, it would be just as well to play the part. "Pardon, monsieur!" I exclaimed, dropping at once into a most deferential attitude, and immediately getting ready to write down his order on the back of a menu-card that was handy. The diner, still in the worst of humours, recited the courses he had selected. "And wine, monsieur?" I asked. Yes, he wanted wine as well, and that order also was faithfully booked. Then I went to the far end of the room to join my own party of friends. What combustible heat the diner developed when he found that his wishes were still unattended to, and what verbal avalanche the real waiter had to endure when he had to ask that the order should be repeated, are matters upon which no light can be thrown—by myself! But to return to the story of the "explosion" in "The Mikado."

My little bit of devilment was duly reported to the management. Mr. Carte summoned me before him and looked very grave. Unauthorised diversions of this kind would never do—and certainly not when perpetrated by a leading principal. "I think it is about time you stopped your school-boy pranks," was his rebuke.

But a different side of Mr. Carte was seen in connection with a certain incident at the Savoy. The point to remember is that it had reference to something that did not involve any liberties with the performance, and this fact put it, in his eyes, in an entirely different category. We had in the company a man who was always telling tales about the rest to the stage manager.

So one night some of us got hold of him, ducked his head in a bucket of dirty water, and kept it there as long as we dare. Naturally he reported us, and in due course we were summoned to attend and explain our conduct to Mr. Carte. We were bidden to enter his room one by one. I, as one of the ringleaders, was the first to go in. "This is very serious," said Mr. Carte, but having heard my explanation of the incident, and still looking exceedingly severe, he warned me that "this sort of thing must not happen again," Then, as a smile stole over his face, he added, "All the same I might have done it myself!"

With that he told me, when I went out of the room, to put one hand on my temple and, with the other stretched out in the air, to exclaim "Oh! it's terrible—terrible." What the effect of this melodramatic posture was on those anxiously waiting outside may well be imagined. It could only mean instant dismissal for all of us. Then Mr. Carte had another culprit before him, and having formally rebuked him, commanded him to make his exit in much the same way. It was an excellent joke—except for those at the end of the queue.

It was Mr. D'Oyly Carte, by the way, who once did me the compliment of saying, "My dear Lytton, you have given me the finest performance I have ever seen of any part on any stage." Strange as it may seem to-day, the rôle which I was playing then, and which drew those most cordial words from one whose praise was always so measured and restrained, was that of *Shadbolt* in the 1897 London revivals of "The Yeomen of the Guard." It was impossible for a small man to play the part just as the big men had played it, and so my interpretation of it was that of a creeping, cringing little dwarf who in manner, in method and in mood was not unlike Uriah Heep. This seemed to me to be consistent with the historical figure from which the part was drawn. Gilbert, it is not generally known, took

him from a wicked, wizened little wretch who, in the sixteenth century, so legend says, haunted the Tower when an execution was due, and offered the unhappy felon a handful of dust, which was, he said, "a powder that will save you from pain." For reward he claimed the victim's valuables.

When, by the way, Mr. Carte told me that mine was the best performance he had ever seen on any stage, I was so flattered by the compliment that I asked him if he would write his opinion down for me, and he readily promised to do so. Within a day or two I received a letter containing those words over his signature, and it remains amongst my treasured possessions. Only once did I know him to be guilty of forgetfulness, and that was when, meeting me in London, he said: "Oh! I think I can offer you an engagement, Lytton." I had to point out to him that I was actually playing in one of his companies. We were, I think, at Greenwich at the time, and I was making a flying visit to London.

Mr. Carte was a great stage manager. He could take in the details of a scene with one sweep of his eagle eye and say unerringly just what was wrong. Shortly before I was leaving town for a provincial tour he noticed that *Ko-Ko's* love scene with *Katisha* might be improved, and so we went together for an extra rehearsal into the pit bar at the Savoy. Mr. Carte said he would be *Katisha* and I, of course, was to be *Ko-Ko*. Now, to make love to a bearded man, and a man who was one's manager into the bargain, was rather a task, but we both entered heartily into the spirit of the thing. "Just act as you would if you were on the stage," was his advice, "though you needn't actually kiss me, you know!" For this scene we had an audience of one. Little Rupert D'Oyly Carte was there, and before the rehearsal commenced I lifted him on to the bar counter, where he sat and simply held his sides with laughter

watching me making earnest love to his father! I imagine he remembers that incident still.

That "eye" for stagecraft, which in Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte amounted to genius, has been inherited in a quite remarkable degree by his son, Mr. Rupert D'Oyly Carte. He, too, has the gift of taking in the details of a scene at a glance, and knowing instinctively just what must be corrected in order to make the colours blend most effectively, the action move most perfectly, and the stage arrangement generally to be in balance and proportion. I need not say that in all this he most faithfully observes all the traditions which have stood so well the test of time.

So far I have given in this chapter my random reminiscences of the chief three figures—the triumvirate, as I have called them—at the Savoy. But there was also a fourth, and it would be a grave omission were I not to mention one who, in my judgment, was as wonderful as any of them. I refer to Miss Helen Lenoir, who, after acting for some years as private secretary to Mr. Carte, became his wife. There was hardly a department of this great enterprise which did not benefit, little though the wider public knew it, from Mrs. Carte's remarkable genius. It was not alone that hers was the woman's hand that lent an added tastefulness to the dressing of the productions. She was a born business woman with an outstanding gift for organisation. No financial statement was too intricate for her, and no contract too abstruse. Once, when I had to put one of her letters to me before my legal adviser, though not, I need hardly say, with any litigious intent, he declared firmly, "This letter *must* have been written by a solicitor." He would not admit that any woman could draw up a document so cleverly guarded with qualifications.

Mrs. Carte, besides her natural business talent, had fine artistic taste and was a sound judge, too, of the capabilities of those who came to the theatre in search

of engagements. The New York productions of the operas were often placed in her charge. Naturally enough, the American managers did not welcome the "invasion" any too heartily, and her responsibilities over there must have been a supreme test of her tact and powers of organisation. Yet the success of these transatlantic ventures could not be gainsaid.

When her husband died Mrs. Carte took the reins of management entirely into her keeping, and it was one of her most remarkable achievements that, notwithstanding constant pain and declining health, this wonderful woman should have carried the operas through a period when, owing to the natural reaction of time, they were suffering a temporary eclipse. Long before she died in 1913 they had entered upon a new lease of life, and to-day we find them once more on the flood tide of prosperity, loved alike by those who are loyal to their favourites of other days and no less by those of the younger generation who have been captivated by all their joyous charm of wit and melody.

Our leader to-day is Mr. Rupert D'Oyly Carte. Of him I find it difficult to speak, as is bound to be the case when one is working in constant association with one who has the same cause at heart, and sharing with him the earnest intention that the great tradition of these operas shall be worthily and faithfully upheld. Upon Rupert D'Oyly Carte's shoulders has fallen the mantle of a splendid heritage. Speaking as the oldest member of his company, and no less as one who may claim also to be a friend, I can assure him that the happy family of artistes who serve under his banner, and who play in these pieces night by night with all the more zest because they love them for their own freshness and grace, will always do their part under him in keeping alight the "sacred lamp," of real English comedy that was first kindled into undying fires within the portals of the Savoy.

## V

### ADVENTURES IN TWO HEMISPHERES

*Actors in Real Life—Reminiscences of my American Visit—A Thrill in Sing-Sing—The Detective and the Crook—Outwitting the Pirates—In "The Gondoliers" in New York—A Cutting Press Critique—Orchestral Afflictions—Our Best Audiences—Enthusiasm in Ireland and a Short-lived Interruption—Exciting Fire Experiences—Too Realistic Thunder and Lightning—"Hell's Full."*

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"LYTTON," said a well-known man of affairs to me, "we are all actors. You are an actor. I am an actor. Come with me to a meeting at which I am to make a speech and I will show you a real-life drama, truer than ever you will see or hear on the stage. The audience would kill me if they dare. They would rend me limb from limb. And yet in half-an-hour—mark my words, in half-an-hour!—they will be shaking me by the hand and everything will be ending happily."

We were in Holborn at the time and we took a short cab-ride into the City. My friend had to meet the shareholders of a company which he had promoted and which had not been prospering. No sooner had he entered the meeting room than he was met with a hostile reception. Epithets of an unequivocally abusive kind were flung at him from every side. Men shook their fists in his face. When he reached the platform the demonstration was redoubled, and at first he was not allowed to speak. Solidly he stood his ground, waiting for the storm to subside. Eventually they did allow him to speak, and first to a crescendo and then to a diminuendo of interruption he told them how the failure of things could not be his fault at all, how he was



Mrs. Richard D'Oyly Carte.





ready to stand by the venture to the very end, how he would guarantee to pay them all their money back with interest, and how he would work the flesh off his bones to put the company right.

Here, indeed, was real drama—and at a company meeting. Here was a man fighting for his commercial existence, and by the force of wits, sheer self-confidence and personal magnetism gradually winning. Just after the meeting closed a number of those infuriated shareholders were on the platform shaking him by the hand and telling him what a fine fellow he was. Towards the end of his speech I had seen him look at his watch and flash a significant glance in my direction. "Well," he said, when he rejoined me, quite calm and collected, "I did it under half-an-hour—in fact, with just a minute to spare."

It is an incident like this which proves that histrionics is no theatrical monopoly. I once met another actor in real life—this time in America. I had gone to New York to do the *Duke* in "The Gondoliers." Amongst the many delightful people I met there was General Sickles. Sickles was a "character," and also a man of influence. Only a few weeks before he had met Captain Shaw, the chief of the London Fire Brigade, whom Gilbert has immortalised in the Queen's beautiful song in "Iolanthe." Shaw had argued with the General that America's fire-fighting methods were not as speedy as they were in England.

"Oh! aren't they?" was the reply. "Come and see." Forthwith the General, who was not a fire chief himself, but who had been Sheriff of New York and was thus a powerful individual, ordered out the New York Fire Brigade. No sooner had a button been touched than the harness automatically fell on the horses, the men came flying down a pole right on to the engine, and in so many seconds the brigade was ready. Long

since, of course, all these methods have been adopted in this country, and I believe I am right in saying that the improvement followed this visit of Captain Shaw to the United States. I myself saw a turn-out of the brigade and thought their swiftness astonishing.

It was General Sickles who introduced me to Mr. Burke, a famous New York detective of his day, who took me on a most interesting tour of Sing-Sing Prison. He persuaded me to sit in the electric chair, and having put the copper band round my head and adjusted the rest of the apparatus, he took a big switch in his hand and said, "I've simply got to press this and you're electrocuted—dead in a jiffy!" I'll own up I did not share his affection for his plaything. The experience was not at all pleasant.

Burke, as an additional thrill, asked me if I should like to meet a notorious bank robber, whom I will call Captain S. It was arranged that the three of us should have dinner together. Captain S., the other real-life actor referred to, was at that time enjoying a spell of liberty, and to me it was amazing how cordial was the friendship between the great detective and the great "crook." When "business" was afoot it was a battle of wits, with the bank robber bringing off some tremendous haul and the detective hot on his tracks to bring him to justice, and probably it was because each had so much respect for the other's talents that socially they could be such excellent pals.

"Yes, Burke," I heard Captain S. say, "you've 'lagged' me before this and I expect you'll do it again." I found him a delightful companion, with a fund of good stories, and he played the violin for us most beautifully.

Captain S. told us how he planned one of his earlier exploits. It was his custom to pose as an English philanthropist who was almost eccentric in his liberality and who made himself *persona grata* in society. Even

the most suspicious would have been disarmed by one so benevolent both in manner and in appearance. In this particular case, having decided on the bank he intended to rob, he took a flat over the building. One part of the day was spent in preparing his gang for the coup and the other part in performing kindly acts of charity. "I really felt sorry," he told us, "when the time had come to do the trick. I had been spending a lot of money and thoroughly enjoying myself. Luckily, we had found that, although the bank had steel walls and a steel floor, it had just an ordinary ceiling. That, of course, helped us enormously, and we got away with a regular pile. I left a note on the counter: 'You must blame the designer of the bank for this, not me.'"

I have not yet explained the circumstances that took me to America. Shortly after "The Gondoliers" had been produced in London it was put on in the States. No sooner had any new Savoy opera been successfully launched in London than preparations were pushed forward for its production on the other side of the Atlantic. This, in point of fact, was done as a precaution. Gilbert, Sullivan and Carte had learnt the need of that by bitter experience in their earlier ventures, which had been exploited by "pirates." These nimble gentlemen, having secured a rough idea of the new opera that was being produced in London, lost no time in bringing out a miserable travesty of it under the identical title that it was given at the Savoy. Thus not only did they trade on the reputation of these operas, but they were able to prevent the genuine production being given under its own title, inasmuch as this would have transgressed the law of copyright. So the "pirates" had to be forestalled by an immediate staging of the real operas, and in some cases these were put on in America simultaneously with, and in one case actually before, the productions in England.

"The Gondoliers" in America was not a success. Mr. Carte, who was there at the time, tried to mend matters by completely re-casting the play. I was in York, and I received a cable "Come to New York." It was never my custom to question my manager's requests. Whenever he commanded I was ready to obey. So from York to New York I travelled by the first available steamer and was soon playing the *Duke of Plaza-Toro*. During my first interview with Mr. Carte after my arrival there occurred an incident characteristic of the great manager. "Lytton," he said, producing his note-book, "I believe you owe me £50." I admitted it—the loan had been for a small speculation. "Well," was his reply, striking his pen through the item, "that debt is paid." It was in this way that he chose to show his appreciation of my action in responding to his summons immediately.

What I remember most about "The Gondoliers" was the simply uproarious laughter with which the audience greeted the line in the Grand Inquisitor's song, "And Dukes were three a penny." It was quite different to the smiles with which the phrase is received in England. The significance of their merriment was the fact that no fewer than seven men had taken the part of the *Duke of Plaza-Toro*! I myself was there as the seventh! A Press critic, having drawn attention to this rather prolific succession, proceeded to place the seven in the order of merit—at least, as it appeared to his judgment. He gave six of the names in his order of preference in ordinary type, and then came a wide gap of space, followed by the last name in the minutest type. While I do not remember where I stood I do know that mine was not the name in such conspicuous inconspicuousness!

Speaking of Press criticisms, which in this country are almost invariably fair and judicious, it was my

curious experience once to go into a barber's shop in a small town in which we were playing and to find the wielder of the razor very keen about discussing the operas. He then urged me to be sure to buy a copy of the *Mudford Gazette*. "I've said something very nice about you," he said. I looked perplexed. "Oh! I'm the musical critic, you know," explained the worthy Figaro.

Our "properties" in the small towns were sometimes a little primitive. Once in "The Gondoliers" our gondola was made of an egg-box on a couple of rollers, and we had to wade ashore. This was at Queenstown, where there was a strike, and we could not get all our baggage from the liner that had brought us from America. But often the chief affliction was the orchestra. I remember one violinist whose efforts were woeful. "You can't play your instrument," the conductor told him at last in exasperation. "Neither would you if your hands were swollen with hard work like mine," was his retort. "This job doesn't pay me. I just come here in the evening." It transpired that he was a bricklayer. At another place the musicianship of one instrumentalist was truly appalling. "How long have you been playing?" asked the conductor. "Thirty years man and boy," was the response. "It is thirty years too long," was the retort.

From time to time I am asked where our best audiences are found. Really it is hard to say. Except for one big city—and why not there it is impossible to explain—the company has a wonderful reception everywhere. The Savoy audiences in the old days, of course, were like no other audiences, and it was something to remember to be at a "first night." Long before the orchestra was due to commence—with Sullivan there to conduct it, as he usually was also at the fiftieth, the hundredth and other "milestone" performances—it

was customary for many of the songs and choruses from the older operas to be sung by the "gods." And wonderful singers they were.

The London audiences of to-day are also splendid. Our welcome in the 1920 season was a memorable experience. Gilbert and Sullivan operas depend for their freshness and their spirit far more on the audience than do any of the ordinary plays, and, as it happens, this enthusiasm on both sides is seldom wanting. Yet now and then we find an audience that is cold and quiet at the beginning and then works up to fever-heat as the opera proceeds, whereas on the other hand there is the audience that begins really too well and towards the end has simply worn itself out, being too exhausted to let itself go.

The North, if not so demonstrative as the South, is always wonderfully responsive to the spirit of the witty dialogue and the sparkling songs, and two cities in which it is always a pleasure to play are Manchester and Liverpool. And those who declare that the Scots cannot see a joke would be disabused if they were to be at the D'Oyly Carte seasons at Glasgow and Edinburgh. Our visits there are always successful. But if I had to decide this matter on a national basis I should certainly bestow the palm on Ireland.

Nowhere are there truer lovers of Gilbert and Sullivan than the Irish. It may be that Gilbert's fantastic wit is the wit they best understand, and it may be, too, that their hearts are warmed by the "plaintive song" of their fellow countryman Sullivan. Whatever the cause, we have no better receptions anywhere. One feature of our Dublin and Belfast audiences is, oddly enough, shared with those at Oxford and Cambridge. They do not merely clap, but openly cheer again and again, throwing all conventional decorum away. And when the Irish are determined to have encores—no matter how

many for a particular piece—there is no denying them.

What we have found in the Emerald Isle—even during the unhappy times during and after the war—was that they kept their pleasures and their politics in watertight compartments. Sinn Feiners they might be outside the theatre, but inside it they are determined to enjoy themselves, as an interrupter found on one of our latest visits, when he tried to protest against the song, "When Britain Really Ruled the Waves." "No politics here," shouted someone from the stalls, and the audience agreeing very heartily with this sentiment the protest subsided into silence.

Looking back on the reference earlier in this chapter to fire brigades, I am reminded that I have more than once been on the stage at times when events have occurred which might have had terrible results, though my success as a panic-fighter is a distinction I would rather have foregone. One incident of this kind was at Eastbourne when we did "Haddon Hall." It will be remembered that in one part there are indications of an oncoming storm of thunder and lightning. Nowadays the authorities take care that effects of this kind are contrived with absolute safety to all concerned, but in those times the lightning was produced by a man in the wings taking pinches of explosive powder out of a canister, throwing these on a candle flame, and so securing a vivid flash over the darkening stage. Well, our man had done this so often that he had grown contemptuous of danger, and this time he took such an ample helping of the powder that the flash caught the canister, and there was a tremendous explosion. The canister went right through the stage and embedded itself in the ground.

In "Haddon Hall" I was *McCrankie*, dressed in a kilt and playing the bagpipes when the explosion



occurred. It plunged both stage and auditorium into darkness. I could hear the injured stage-hand groaning near the wings. Somehow I managed to grope my way to the man, pick him up in my arms, and carry him to one of the exits from the stage. I remember that a number of the chorus ladies, who could not find the door in the darkness, were clawing the walls of the scenery, for in their panic that was the only way they thought they could make their escape. The strange thing was that the door was not a yard away.

Still dressed as a kilted Scot, I carried the injured man into the street, and already a crowd had gathered in the belief that there had been a terrible disaster. If not as serious as that, it had been quite bad enough, and it was a miracle that there had not actually been a calamity. In one of the boxes was one of those hardy playgoers who attended our shows night after night. We had nicknamed him "Festive." The concussion had lifted him out of his seat on to the floor. He complained that the thunder had been far too realistic!

Fortunately we were able to go on with the performance, though many of us were suffering from nerves very badly. The stage hand had been speedily taken to hospital with serious injuries. It was typical of Mr. Carte's kindness that, although the man had been guilty of a very grave fault, he did not dismiss him from his service, but on his recovery made him a messenger and afterwards gave him a pension.

Early in my career as a D'Oyly Carte principal on the provincial tours, we had a fire on the stage at the Lyceum, Edinburgh. It was the week before Henry Irving was due there to give his first production of "Faust." I remember that because we had his great organ behind the stage. Our piece that night was "Ruddigore," and while I was singing one of my numbers I became aware that something was amiss. It



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
Jack Point in "The Yeomen of the Guard."



proved to be an outbreak of fire in the sky borders over the stage, and small smouldering fragments were falling around me in a manner that was entirely unpleasant. The steps at the back also caught fire, and it was a lucky thing that, the piece being then a new one, the audience should have taken it as a bit of realism added to the ghost scene. Otherwise nothing could have avoided a panic.

I remember the stage manager shouting to me from the wings "Keep singing, keep singing." It was not easy, I can assure you, to keep on with a humorous number in circumstances like those, and with sparks dropping over one's head, but I did keep on with the song until they decided to ring down the curtain. Then I was told to run upstairs to warn the girls, whose dressing-rooms were near the flies. Now, as a young man, I had made a reputation for myself as a practical joker, and one of my favourite antics was to tell this person or that, quite untruly, "You're wanted on the stage." Thus, when I rushed up to sound the real alarm, it was treated as a cry of "Wolf!" I banged the doors and entreated them to come out, but it was not until the smoke began to creep into the rooms that the girls knew positively that there was a fire, and promptly scurried for safety. Fortunately the outbreak was speedily subdued and the performance proceeded.

A minor incident of this kind may be worth mentioning. We were in "*Erminie*" at the Comedy, and at the close of one of the acts the chorus, the ladies dressed as fisher girls and holding lighted candles, were singing a concerted "*Good Night*." Suddenly I noticed that one of the girls, who was not paying much attention to her work, had let the candle ignite the mob cap she was wearing. If the flame had reached her wig—and wigs in those days were cleaned with spirit—she must have been seriously burnt. So I ran up and tore off her cap,

only to be rewarded with a haughty, "How dare you!" Later, when she realised what her danger had been, her apology and thanks were profuse.

It may not, I think, be amiss if to these combustible reminiscences is added just one more story, though in a much lighter vein. It occurred in "The Sorcerer." *John Wellington Wells*, the "dealer in magic and spells," disappears at last into the nether regions, as it were, through the trap-door in the stage. One night the trap, having dropped a foot or so, refused to move any further, and there was I, enveloped in smoke and brimstone, poised between earth and elsewhere. So all I could do was to jump back on to the boards, make a grimace at the refractory trap-door, and go off by the ordinary exit. "Hell's full!" shouted an irreverent voice from the "gods." The joke, I know, was not a new one, for legend has it that a similar incident occurred during a performance of "Faust." Whether it did or not I do know that it occurred in that performance of "The Sorcerer."

## VI

### PARTS I HAVE PLAYED

*List of my Gilbert and Sullivan Roles—Parts in Other Comedies—Excursions into Vaudeville—A Human Shuttlecock—When Gilbert Appeared before the Footlights—Essays as a Playwright—A Burlesque of Shakespeare—Embarrassing Invitations—A Jester's Hidden Remorse—My Life's Helpmate.*

It is my melancholy distinction to be the last of the Savoyards. Numbers of my old comrades, of course, are playing elsewhere or living in their well-earned retirement, but I alone remain actively in Gilbert and Sullivan. In all I have played thirty parts in the operas—no other artiste connected with them has ever played so many—and it may interest my innumerable known and unknown friends if I “put them on my list.” In the following table I give incidentally the date of the original production of the comedies in London:—

“Trial by Jury” (1875)	..	Judge; Counsel; Usher.
“The Sorcerer” (1877)	..	Hercules; Dr. Daly; Sir Marmaduke; John Wellington Wells.
“H.M.S. Pinafore” (1878)	..	Dick Deadeye; Captain Corcoran; Sir Joseph Porter.
“The Pirates of Penzance” (1880)	.. ..	Samuel; The Pirate King, Major-General Stanley.
“Patience” (1881)	.. ..	Grosvenor; Bunthorne.
“Iolanthe” (1882)	.. ..	Strephon; Lord Mountararat, Lord Chancellor.
“Princess Ida” (1884)	..	Florian; King Gama
“The Mikado” (1885)	..	The Mikado; Ko-Ko.
“Ruddigore” (1887)	..	Robin Oakapple.
“The Yeomen of the Guard” (1888)	.. ..	Lieutenant of the Tower, Shadbolt; Jack Point.
“The Gondoliers” (1889)	..	Guiseppi; The Duke of Plaza-Toro.
“Utopia Ltd” (1893)	..	The King.
“The Grand Duke” (1896)	..	The Grand Duke.

My connection with the D'Oyly Carte company falls into three periods. The first of these was in 1884 and 1885, when I went on tour for twelve months with "Princess Ida," to be followed by the heart-breaking time I have recounted in the "Vagabondage of the Commonwealth." Then, in 1887, I rejoined it to win my first success as George Grossmith's understudy in "Ruddigore." That period was destined to continue almost without interruption until 1901. For most of this time I was touring in the provinces, though I was in London for many of the revivals, as well as for several of the plays not by Gilbert and Sullivan produced by Mr. D'Oyly Carte. Eventually this latter enterprise was brought to an end by the death of Sir Arthur Sullivan in 1900, and by that of Mr. Carte himself four months later, in 1901. London saw the Gilbert and Sullivan works no more until 1906, though the suburban theatres were sometimes visited by the provincial company, which in the country kept alight the flickering torch that was to burn once more with all its accustomed brightness.

Shortly after my old chief had passed away, I closed my second period with the company in order to throw in my lot with the musical comedy stage, and it was my good fortune to play leading comedy parts under several successful managements. Looking back on those years, regard them as amongst the most prosperous and happy in my career, and yet it is no affectation to say that all other parts seemed shallow and superficial when one has played so long in Gilbert and Sullivan. Shall I say I was anxious to return to them? In a sense that would be true. Certainly the yearning was there—if not the opportunity. Then, in 1909, Sir William Gilbert earnestly invited me to rejoin the company, and I relinquished a very profitable engagement in order to play once more the parts I loved so well. Thus began my third period with the operas. This period has still to be finished.

Sir William, I ought to say, was at this time an ageing man, and he had retired with a comfortable fortune. Grim's Dyke and its beautiful grounds gave him all the enjoyment he wanted, and to the end he had the solace and companionship of his devoted wife, Lady Gilbert. He died in 1911. Following a visit to town, he had gone to bathe in the lake in his grounds, and had a heart seizure whilst swimming. He was rescued from the water and carried to his room, but there life was found to be extinct. The curtain had fallen.

But to proceed. I propose to give a list of the comedies in which I played between 1901 and 1909. Lacking a good memory for dates, I cannot guarantee at all that the order in which they appear is correct, though approximately this may be the case:—

Comedy.	Part.	Management.
"The Rose of Persia"	.. <i>The Sultan</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Emerald Isle"	.. <i>Pat Murphy</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"Merrie England" ..	.. <i>Earl of Essex</i>	D'Oyly Carte
"The Beauty Stone"	.. <i>Simon</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Lucky Star"	.. <i>Tobasco</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"His Majesty" ..	.. <i>The King</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Grand Duchess"	.. <i>Prince Paul</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Vicar of Bray"	.. <i>The Vicar</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Princess of Kensington"	<i>Jelf</i> ..	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Earl and the Girl"	.. <i>The Earl</i>	.. William Greet.
"The Spring Chicken"	.. <i>Boniface</i>	.. George Edwardes
"The Little Michus"	.. <i>Aristide</i>	.. George Edwardes
"My Darling" ..	.. <i>Hon. Jack Hylton</i>	.. Seymour Hicks.
"Talk of the Town"	.. <i>Lieut. Reggie Drummond</i>	.. Seymour Hicks.
"The White Chrysanthemum"	<i>Lieut. R. Armitage</i>	.. Frank Curzon.
"The Amateur Raffles"	.. <i>Raffles</i>	.. Music Halls.
"Mirette" .. ..	.. <i>Bobinet</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Chieftain"	.. <i>Peter Grigg</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"The Grand Duchess"	.. <i>Prince Paul</i>	.. D'Oyly Carte.
"Billie Taylor" ..	.. <i>Captain Flapper</i>	D'Oyly Carte.



In the opinion of many friends, my best piece of pure character acting was that as *Pat Murphy*, the piper in "The Emerald Isle." Without a doubt it *was* a fine part. I had to be blind, and in contrast to the manner in which most blind characters were played at that time, my eyes were wide open and rigid. From the moment I entered I riveted my gaze tragically on one particular spot, and my eyes never moved, no matter who spoke or however dramatic the point. Naturally the strain was tremendous. Then, at last, *Pat's* colleen lover began to have suspicions that he was not really blind—that the idle good-for-nothing fellow was shamming. And when *Pat* admitted it, the subterfuge had been kept up so long that, both to those on the stage and to the audience, the effect was marvellous to a degree. I loved playing the piper and speaking the brogue. "The Emerald Isle," as is now generally known, was the last work that Sir Arthur Sullivan composed, and on his lamented death the music was completed by my gifted friend, Edward German. I remember that when, later on, the piece was taken to Dublin, we had doubts as to whether anything in it might offend the susceptibilities of the good people of the "disthressful counthree." Strangely enough, no objection of any kind was raised until the jig in the second act, and as it was believed that this was not done correctly and that the girls were lifting their heels too high, the dance was greeted with an outburst of booing. This was quelled by the lusty voice at the back of the pit. "Shame on ye," he shouted. "Can't ye be aisy out of respect for the dead?" And another voice: "Eh, an' Sullivan an Oirishman too, so he was!" The appeal was magical. The interruption died away and the performance proceeded. ~

"The Earl and the Girl," the most successful of all the musical comedies in which I appeared and the one

which gave me my biggest real comedy part, ran for one year at the Adelphi, and then for a further year at the Lyric. When it was withdrawn I secured the permission of the management to use "My Cosy Corner," the most tuneful of all its musical numbers, as a scena on the music-halls, and with my corps of Cosy Corner Girls it was a decided success.

One other venture of mine on the music-halls was in conjunction with Connie Ediss, when we had both completed an engagement at the Gaiety. "United Service," in which we figured together, ran for fourteen weeks at the Pavilion, and it provided me with one of the best salaries I ever drew. The idea of this piece was a contrast in courtships. First we would imitate a stately old colonel paying his addresses to an exquisite lady, and then a ranker making love to the cook, with an idiom appropriate to life "below-stairs." Eighteen changes of dress had to be made by each of us, and the fun waxed fast and furious when the colonel commenced pouring his courtly phrases into the ears of the cook, and when, by a similar deliberate mishap, the soldier in his most ardent vernacular declared his passion for m'lady.

Connie Ediss and I might have done as well with a successor to "United Service." But the theatre, she said, "called her back," and accordingly we went our separate ways in "legitimate."

Some reminiscences still remain to be told of my struggling early days on the stage. One of these concerns my brief and boisterous connection with the well-known Harvey Troupe. I was chosen as deputy for their page boy, whom these acrobats threw hither and thither as if he were a human shuttlecock, and a very clever act it was, however uncomfortable for the unfortunate youngster. I scarcely relished the job, but old Harvey told me "All you've to do is to come on the

stage ; leave the rest to us ; we'll pull you through." It was not a case of pulling me through. They literally *threw* me through. For half-an-hour I was thrown from one to another with lightning speed, and that was about all I knew of the performance. "You did very well," they told me afterwards, "didn't you hear the laughs ?" I am afraid I hadn't heard them. I had been conscious only of an appalling giddiness and of feeling bruised and sore. Next day I was black and blue, and unable to perform, but in those hard days, when food was scarce, one had to be ready for anything.

It was about this time in my career that I secured a pantomime engagement at the Prince's, Manchester, though my rôle was merely that of standard-bearer in the finale, to the "show lady," before whom I walked with a banner inscribed, "St. George and the Dragon." Unfortunately, in my nervousness, I marched on with the reverse side of the banner to the front, and at the sight of this piece of tawdry linen the audience laughed uproariously.

When the Second Demon was absent I was chosen as his understudy, and it seemed to me to be a wonderful honour, because it gave me eight words to speak. I had the comforting feeling of being a big star already. How well I remember those lines :—

Second Demon (sepulchral and sinister) : Who calls on me in this unfriendly way ?

Fairy Queen (in a piping treble) : A greater power than yours ; hear and obey !

Coming to a much later date, I include in my list of memorable theatrical occasions the benefit *matinée* given in the Drury Lane Theatre for Nellie Farren, for many years the bright particular star at the Gaiety. The stage was determined to pay the worthiest tribute it could to the brilliant artiste who, once the idol of her day, was now laid aside by sickness and suffering, and

never had such a wonderful programme been presented. King Edward, then Prince of Wales, gave the benefit his gracious patronage, and it was in every way a remarkable success. The D'Oyly Carte contribution to the entertainment was "Trial by Jury." Gilbert himself figured in the scene as the *Associate*. It was, I believe, his only appearance before the footlights in public, and it was a part in which he had not a line to speak. I played the *Foreman*. Amongst other benefit performances in which I have taken part were those to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dacre and Miss Ellen Terry. We gave "Trial by Jury" on these occasions also, and my part was *Counsel*.

Speaking of King Edward, I am reminded that when, by going to the Palace Theatre after his accession, His Majesty paid the first visit of any British Sovereign to a music-hall, the occasion coincided with the run there of an operetta of my own, called the "Knights of the Road." It was a Dick Turpin story, for which I had written the lyrics, and the music had been provided by my good friend Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music. I conceived the idea that pieces of this kind, based on English stories and typically English alike in sentiment and musical setting, might be made an attractive feature on the music-halls, and in point of fact, all that was wrong with the experiment was that it was a little too early. To-day, when the better-class music-halls have attained a remarkable standard of taste, they would be just the thing. Nevertheless, my "Knights of the Road" had a successful career, and it served to give Walter Hyde, now one of our leading operatic tenors, one of his first chances to sing in the Metropolis.

I wrote about eight of these pieces altogether. The libretto and the scores are still in existence, and for better or for worse, they may be produced even yet.

One of them is written round the well-known picture, "The Duel in the Snow." This depicts a beautiful woman rushing between the two swords in a duel, and my object was to fill in the dramatic significance of the picture, representing how it came about that the men were fighting in those wintry surroundings for the hand of the lady.

"For one night only" I appeared with the Follies. I was at the Palace in "My Cosy Corner," and Pellissier asked me to come on, garbed as the poet, in their burlesque on Shakespeare. Leaning from my pedestal, I had to reproach them for daring to take such liberties, and we finished up with a boxing match. Our jokes on that occasion were mainly extemporised. Nobody in the audience knew that I was acting deputy, but those in the wings had heard that a conspiracy of some kind was afoot, and they entered heartily into the spirit of the burlesque.

It is far easier, I think, to improvise on the stage than it is away from the footlights, and I well remember my dilemma when I was once invited to an "at home." It was a children's party, and my hostess had told the youngsters that they were going to see *Ko-Ko*, the "funny man" in "The Mikado." No doubt if I had come in my Oriental costume it would have been less difficult to act up to the part, but it was quite another thing to arrive in an immaculate frock-coat and silk hat, to be escorted at once into the circle of children, and invited then and there to act the clown in the circus with "jibe and joke and quip and crank." For some moments I stood almost tongue-tied. Luckily, as it happened, my hostess handed me a cup of tea, and in my nervousness I dropped it. The children giggled hugely. With that trivial incident the ice was broken.

Enjoyable as it is to meet so many people in the social sphere, our good friends who see us from the

auditorium, and then shower their invitations upon us, are at times a little embarrassing. Kind as they undoubtedly are—and we do appreciate the hospitality so readily offered to us wherever we go—they are perhaps forgetful that every week we have to get through seven or eight hard performances. With rehearsals taken into account, we have not over-much leisure for social enjoyment, and certainly no great reserves of energy. A Scotch lady was once most pressing that I should attend a dance she was arranging. Now, much as I love dancing on the stage, I have never had any taste at all for the conventional ball-room dancing, and really how could one have after doing, say, the courtly gavotte in “The Gondoliers?” “I never dance,” I told my Scottish friend, “unless I’m paid for it.” Evidently she mistook my meaning, for with her invitation to her dance she enclosed me—a cheque for £5. I returned it with my compliments.

I was present in Scotland some time ago, when rather a beautiful incident occurred. My host was fixing up his new wireless set; his little daughter, three years old, was to be the first to listen-in. Everything was now in order; head-phones carefully adjusted to the sweet mite’s head; her face showing her intense excitement. Her mother, being anxious to know what her dear one thought, asked “Can you hear, darling?” “Sh!! Mummie. Dawd speaking.”

Among the many beautiful gifts I have had from time to time from members of the audience (some as mascots, others that bring back weird and strange stories) is an old Indian dagger, with a beautiful carved blade, the handle with gold and platinum roughly beaten in. It was given me by a retired Indian official whose duty it was to be present at all executions. This is his story:

“It was a cold, grey morning; the mist was just rising over the hills; dawn had broken. ‘Everything is

ready, sir,' said the guard. Three magnificent men were marched passed me, heads erect, almost defiant. It was hard to believe that they were three of the most cold-blooded murderers that it had ever been my duty to see pay the last penalty. 'Halt!' I then had to ask had they any requests to make. 'Yes, Sahib, I want to smoke.' The other two nodded. I gave the first a cigar, who smoked for a few minutes, and when told it was time, passed it on to the second man. The second man doing the same; the third man, as his time had come, placed the still lighted cigar on the ground, thanked me for all I had done, and begged me to accept his dagger. When the three had gone to the Beyond, the smoke was still curling upwards from that cigar."

A lady had seen a Gilbert and Sullivan opera for the first time.

"I shall have to see them all now," she said; "especially 'The Gondoliers.' Isn't that the opera with the famous song 'Two Lovely Black Eyes'?"

One of the audience was heard to say the other night, on leaving the theatre, "Now I have seen all the operas. Well, all but one; I haven't seen the Repertory."

From time to time on these social occasions we are prevailed upon to give one or two of our songs from the operas. Songs from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, nevertheless, seldom sound well away from the stage and their familiar surroundings, and long ago most amateur vocalists dropped them from their repertory. I, personally, have found that the most suitable of my numbers for private circles are the *Lord Chancellor's* "Dream Song"—it is so dramatic that it goes quite well as an unaccompanied recitation—and *King Gama's* "I can't tell why." Here I must note a remarkable fact. When I am on the stage, I know not only my own lines, but the lines of everyone else, but away from the stage and the atmosphere of the play my otherwise

excellent memory is not always so amenable to discipline. Indeed, I can recall an occasion when, at a garden party, I was asked to sing "Tit Willow." I cheerfully undertook to do so, but half-way through I stumbled, and try as I would even with the promptings of obliging friends, I could get no further than the middle of the second verse. And yet on the stage I have sung "Tit Willow" without a fault many thousands of times.

I think I was only once in any danger of forgetting my lines on the stage. It happened in "The Mikado." Behind the scenes, unknown to me, *Poo-h Bah* had fainted, and one of his entrances had to be made by *Pish Tush*. Well, I was on as *Ko-Ko* at the time, and the sound of an unexpected voice was so strange, so bewildering, that for a moment it seemed to me that my reason had gone! "Get off! It's *Poo-h Bah*!" I whispered, excitedly. *Pish Tush* managed to give me a hint that something had happened, and we continued our comedy scene, though in my frame of mind this might easily have come to grief!

Speaking of memory, I am reminded that my first recollection in life was that of listening, as a very small child, to a lad playing a quaint little tune on a banjo. I never heard that tune again, but it has ever since remained in my mind, and only a few years ago I was talking about it to a man who had spent nearly all his life in Australia. When we were children we were neighbours in the same village. "Yes," said my long-lost friend, "I was the lad who played that tune on the banjo, and you were lying in a cot in the garden!" Between that incident and our mutual recollection of it nearly fifty eventful years for both of us had passed.

Before I close this chapter of random reminiscences I feel I must pay my tribute to the best, the oldest and the truest of all my friends—my helpmate in life, "Louie



Henri." As Albert Chevalier would put it, "We've been together now for (almost) forty years, and it don't seem a day too much." Louie Henri, as I have already told, secured me my first engagement, and from that time to this she has been the intimate sharer in whatever troubles and successes have fallen to me in what is now a long and eventful career. Optimistic as I may be in temperament, there were times when her encouragement meant a great deal, and to my wife I pay this brief tribute (as brief it is bound to be). Our family has consisted of three sons and two daughters. Our two elder sons served during the war in the Royal Air Force, and one of them was lost whilst flying in a night-bombing raid in France. I well remember the time when my boy was first reported missing. With that anxious sorrow weighing on my mind, it was no small trial to keep alive the semblance, at least, of comedy.

Oh, a private buffoon is a light-hearted loon,  
If you listen to popular rumour.

*Jack Point's* song appealed to me with peculiar poignancy during that time of heavy anxiety. But to return to my wife.

Louie Henri, as the older generation well remembers, is able to count herself amongst the distinguished Savoyards. Before she retired she had probably played a greater number of parts—soprano, contralto, and soubrette—than any other lady connected with the company. I am sure it will be of interest if I enumerate here the rôles she has played:—

"Trial by Jury"	..	..	<i>Plaintiff.</i>
"The Sorcerer"	..	..	<i>Constance ; Mrs. Partlet.</i>
"H.M.S. Pinafore"	..	..	<i>Josephine ; Hebe.</i>
"The Pirates of Penzance"	..	..	<i>Edith.</i>
"Patience"	..	..	<i>Lady Angela.</i>
"Iolanthe"	..	..	<i>Iolanthe</i>
"Princess Ida"	..	..	<i>Melissa.</i>

"The Mikado"	..	..	..	<i>Pitti Sing.</i>
"Ruddigore"	..	..	..	<i>Mad Margaret.</i>
"The Yeomen of the Guard"	..	..	..	<i>Phoebe.</i>
"The Gondoliers"	..	..	..	<i>Tessa.</i>
"Utopia, Ltd"	..	..	..	<i>Nelraya.</i>
"The Grand Duke"	..	..	..	<i>Julia.</i>

Mrs. Lytton, apart from her success as an actress, has always been an accomplished musician, and in that respect I owe much to her for the way in which, during the preparation of my new rôles, she has helped me, "a lame, unmusical dog, over the stile." Our pianoforte at home is the one on which Sir Arthur Sullivan first played over his music for "The Mikado." It is a handsome satinwood grand, designed for Mr. D'Oyly Carte by the late Sir Alma Tadema, R.A., and this most interesting and valuable souvenir was presented to me by Mrs. D'Oyly Carte.

## VII

### FRIENDS ON AND OFF THE STAGE

*Lessons to the Prince on the Bagpipes—A Charming and Lovable Personality—Queen Alexandra's Compliment—An Afternoon with Fisher—Stories of the Great Seaman—George Edwardes and his Genius for Stagecraft—His Successes on the Turf—"Honest Frank" Cellier—A Model Conductor—Traditions of the Savoy—Rutland Barrington—An Admiral in Disguise—Fred Billington—A Strange Premonition—Our War-Time Experiences—Caught in the Toils of the Dublin Rebellion.*

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It was my great privilege and pleasure, when we were at Oxford on one occasion, to be introduced to the Prince of Wales, who was then in residence at Magdalen. Nothing impressed me more than his sunny nature and the wonderful knack he had of putting everybody at their ease immediately. Since then it has been just those qualities which have made him so immensely popular in his tours of the Empire.

Our first meeting was in His Royal Highness's own rooms, where he was accompanied by his tutor, Mr. H. P. Hansell. I remember that as I was speaking to him the members of a college team were brought in to be presented. "Ah!" exclaimed the Prince, "that's the best of being a celebrity, Lytton. I could not draw a muster like this." It was just a little pleasantry, this suggestion that it was myself who was the attraction, but it was an example of his happy knack of putting everybody at their ease immediately. I recall, too, that the Prince at that time was learning the chanter, with which one proceeds to the full glory of playing the bagpipes. Greatly to his surprise, I took the chanter and proceeded to give him a lesson, to which he listened most attentively, and then played a skirl, with which he was delighted. It so happens that, although I am no

PS Don't trouble to answer that one if you can!  
 Dear Hist Lord! any of you

I was prepared to say  
 "Sack the Lot"!!!

thinking the old Cast of Pineapple could  
 not even be approached! but

now I say (after seeing you all 4 times!)  
 'I love the Lot'!!!

as if a better (barring the scenery)  
 with you all come to tea (up to the  
 number of ten) at above address as the  
 Doctors will welcome you all as cordially  
 as I shall at 5.30 PM Winn's Sunday  
 (The room will hold more) - Yours Fisher. 24.1.23

Letter from Lord Fisher.



musician, I do know how to handle the bagpipes, and once a group of Scottish yokels who were listening to me stood open-mouthed with astonishment that such skill should be possessed by a trousered Englishman. This was when I visited my old colleague Durward Lely's place in the Highlands. The Scotties were enjoying a homely dance in a barn, and as the piper had been hard at it and seemed tired, I volunteered to act as his deputy. I don't want to be boastful, but my performance was regarded as a *tour de force*, at least for a Saxon.

The Prince came to the theatre frequently during our stay, and one night he came round to our dressing-room, where once more one fell irresistibly under the spell of his lovable and attractive personality. He invariably addressed me as "Ko-Ko." The Prince told me then, as he had done on other occasions, how really delightful he thought the operas were, and he said he looked forward to seeing them again and again. Then he asked to be introduced to a member who, in more than one sense, is one of the stalwarts of the choristers, Joe Ruff. Seeing that Joe had been with us so many years, I thought this special "recognition" was particularly happy, and it was a very great pleasure to me to be allowed to introduce my colleague to the Heir-Apparent.

From time to time, both during my connection with D'Oyly Carte and when temporarily away from the company, I have played before Royalty. Especially do I recall a night when Queen Alexandra occupied a box at the Savoy. It was in the "Yeomen of the Guard" revivals and my rôle was *Shadbolt*. Her Majesty was kind enough to send Sir Arthur Sullivan to my dressing-room to compliment me on the clearness of my enunciation, and I need hardly say how gratifying such praise was to me.

Seldom was H.M.S. Pinafore" staged during the

1920 season without Lord Fisher coming to chuckle over Gilbert's clever satire on the "ruler of the Queen's Navee." He revelled in that opera. It was not only, I think, that it smacked of the sea, but he loved the jibes at the politicians and the hearty loyalty of the honest salt who, "in spite of all temptation," firmly resolves to "remain an Englishman." It was after he had seen me several times as *Sir Joseph Porter* that he invited me to bring a few of my colleagues and spend an afternoon with him at his home in London. I reproduce his very typical letter on another page. My recollections of that afternoon are very delightful. Lord Fisher was a wonderful veteran, and it was difficult afterwards to realise that a fortnight later he was stricken down with his last illness, to which he succumbed in the following July.

I remember that we did not have to do much of the talking. Lord Fisher walked up and down, up and down the room as if it were the quarter deck, and he was telling us all the while such capital stories that we forgot that we, too, were still standing up! Of his yarns there were two that were very typical of the man and his ways.

"One day," he began, "I was walking through Trafalgar Square, and, as I always do, I looked up at the statue of the greatest man that ever lived. Then a woman who was munching a bun came along, 'Here, master,' she said, 'who's 'e?' 'That's Lord Nelson.' I answered. 'Is it?' she returned, 'and who's 'e?' Fancy! Never heard of Nelson! Such ignorance! 'Well,' I said, 'if it had not been for him, that bun would have cost you, not a halfpenny, but fourpence. Good day!' And I walked on. I suppose she thought she had been talking to a lunatic."

Then Lord Fisher spoke of the exertion needed in our dances on the stage. "Energy! Energy! That's what we want," he declared. "Why, I was fed by my mother until I was quite a big baby. I refused to be

weaned—I was so determined even in those days! You must have good natural food when you are born. It means everything. It gives you stamina—it makes a man of you.”

From that interview I brought away a signed portrait of the great seaman. “I’m an ugly blighter, aren’t I?” he reflected, sadly, as he handed it to me, “but I’m good.” Candour would have compelled one to admit that he was anything but strikingly handsome, but in that small, intensely sallow face there was, after all, something that was extraordinarily kindly and strong. In that sense his face was the faithful mirror of his character.

“Jackie Fisher’s” candour reminds me of a frank admission made to me by a statesman who still wields a leading influence in present-day politics. I think I had better not mention his name, although he is numbered amongst my friends, and he has often been exceedingly kind in his appreciation of my work on the stage. He told me he once met a lady whom he had not seen for several years, and having cordially greeted her, he said, “I’m so delighted to see you Sybil.” That he should have remembered her, and still more, that he should have remembered her first name, pleased the lady immensely. She said she was charmed that he had not forgotten her name. “Oh,” responded the statesman, with the best of intentions, “I’ve a remarkable memory for trifles.” The next moment he realised he had committed an awful *faux pas*. What was more, he saw that he, though a politician, could not explain it away.

Not many people remember now that Mr. George Edwardes, who created the vogue for musical comedies as we now know them, and who made a fortune out of his connection with the Gaiety and Daly’s, was in his early days Mr. D’Oyly Carte’s manager at the Savoy. When he became a producer his flair for stage effect



amounted to genius. He could decide in a moment to make the most revolutionary changes in a production. For instance, I have heard him give orders that the first act should be made the second one and the second the first, because he saw that it would better work up the interest in the play. He would transpose a certain scene from here to there because he knew instinctively that there was its proper place. "I don't like that man singing that song," he said once, just before a new comedy was due to have its first performance, and, when even the dress rehearsals were almost complete, "we'll give it to a lady." "But," it was objected, "it's a man's song—a military song." "Never mind," he answered, in that familiar drawling voice of his, "we'll dress her in a red coat, and we'll bring the chorus on as soldiers too." And his judgment was absolutely right. That girl's soldier song was the great hit of the piece.

George Edwardes was a generous, kindly-natured man, accessible to everybody, and a splendid companion. Keenly interested as he was in his theatrical ventures, he never made these his sole and only pre-occupation. Upon the Turf, as every sportsman knows, he was a shining light, and many horses from his stables won the biggest prizes of their year. He often invited me to join him at the races, and never failed to tell me the winners—"well, hardly ever." One day he gave me three running. Just then I was arranging to play under his management for a term of three years, and he said those three winners proved that we could make money together both on and off the stage, and that we must sign up the contract, which we did the next day.

One of my closest friends was Francois Cellier, of whom it would be literally true to say that he devoted his life, his talents and all his enthusiasm to the operas at the Savoy. For thirty-five years he served them as conductor, to the exclusion of all the fame he might have

won in a wider field, for he was a musician of surpassing accomplishments. He was the younger brother of Alfred Cellier, who was the composer, amongst other delightful comedies, of "Dorothy." Both men were Bohemians, and both of them might have been the architects of their own fortunes if they had put only their own goal in front of them, and pursued it steadily.

Francois Cellier—Honest Frank they called him, and the name suited him well—was a prince of good fellows and a most charming and helpful companion. I can never tell the debt I owe to him for all the advice he gave to me regarding our performances. He knew Gilbert's and Sullivan's ideas to the minutest detail, and, with all his love of the operas, he wanted those ideas carried through exactly on the stage. Even with the audiences he had a magnetic personality. Unlike most conductors, who feel they must allow just as many encores as the audience demands, he could indicate by some strange method to those behind him that an encore would be unreasonable or inconsiderate, and immediately the applause would subside and the play would proceed.

Cellier had his heart and soul in every performance, and what that means is known only to those who work on the stage, and who do sometimes become dull and listless because of their very familiarity with the parts they are playing or because the audience cannot easily be aroused to "concert pitch." What brightness they may give to their acting is of a superficial and mechanical kind that can give them no pleasure. It is at just such times as these that a real conductor is worth his weight in gold. Notwithstanding that he may have seen the piece hundreds of times—and might with reason be more bored than the principals themselves—he comes to each new performance with an enthusiasm which shakes the company out of themselves and makes everything go with a will.

Some conductors I have known have shown so little interest in their work that they did not even attempt to conceal their boredom. This is very unfair to the players. Can anyone expect there to be any spirit in the singing of a chorus when the conductor is just listlessly waving his baton, or when he shows such little respect for the artistes that, during their dialogues, he either yawns sleepily or leans over for a chat with the strings? Cellier was never guilty of that discourtesy. From the time he picked up his baton for the first bar of the overture the "play was the thing." During a chorus you would see him alert and awake and stirring on the company to give their best, and during your own solos or dialogues you would see him listening intently so that, like a friendly critic, he could afterwards praise you for what you had done well or give you hints where there was cause for improvement. It is a great thing to the artistes to see a genial face at the conductor's desk, and the operas go with a great spirit and verve whenever the conductor, seconded by the orchestra, is doing everything to help us along. Our company's record has been a very fortunate one in this respect.

Everybody who plays in Gilbert and Sullivan makes it a point of honour to do his or her best to preserve what we call the traditions of the Savoy. If I were asked to name the secret of the charm of these operas, I should have to answer that there was not one secret, but many, but that one of the chief is their sense of "repose." Gilbert, like the master playwright he was, would never have two situations running together. If, that is to say, the leading character was going to offer his hand to the heroine, the whole company must look on eagerly and expectantly. It would never do for them to be indifferent and uninterested. Still less would it do for subsidiary characters to do something that might attract the audience's eye to them in some other part

of the stage. Everything must be focussed on the central incident, and to this end every member of the company must think first and all the time of the play, and not indulge in those hateful individual touches of "pantomime."

What I mean is best seen in what happens quite frequently in ordinary plays. Nearly every minor actor and actress seems to take, or is allowed to take, licence to put in a little bit of "business" on his or her own account, and so draw kudos to himself or herself by being supposed to be "funny." It is really only "supposed." Generally it is not funny at all, and it mars the effect of the play by making the entire atmosphere restless and perplexed. Eyes are strained here, there and everywhere, and the poor audience in trying to catch this, that and the other point, is probably missing what is the chief point of the play. Well, if refinement is not the keynote of a production, this may possibly not matter so much, but it is certainly foreign to the tranquil atmosphere of Gilbert and Sullivan.

No one, I think, could have done more by his example on the stage to encourage refinement in these operas than my good friend, Rutland Barrington. During his playing career—now at an end, unhappily—he was an artiste to his finger-tips. He had also a great asset in his fine presence and personality. Our friendship has been of the closest, and I call to mind an incident when we were at Portsmouth and when there was something important occurring at the Royal Dockyard. "We can't get in without a pass," I said to him, but he only smiled and said that, at all events, we could try.

"Watch me," he commanded. Straightening himself up, he walked to the gates as if to the manner born, took the salute from the sentries, and entered the yard. It looked ridiculously easy. So I decided to follow suit. The sentries would not let me through. "Can't come in without a pass," I was told, and let me through they

would not on any account, however much I tried to "flatter, cajole and persuade." Barrington always did have "a way with him." I imagine the sentries were impressed by his bearing, or it may be that they had mistaken him for his brother, Admiral Fleet.

This naval reference serves to recall a most interesting story bearing on the subject of "make-up." Now "make-up" has always been a fascinating study to me, and many kind friends tell me that I have a special gift for it, instancing how completely I transform my appearance for parts so different, for example, as the hunchback *King Gama* and the martial old *General Stanley*. Certainly I do spend more time than most actors do over the arts and deceptions of the dressing-room. For *King Gama* the make-up of the face alone takes an hour, apart from all the physical deformities that have to be contrived when playing this ugly, ungainly character in "Princess Ida." But all this by the way. What I was going to write about was an incident when a worried young naval lieutenant came to see me at the close of our show at the Savoy. He was at the romantic age then, a trifle oblivious to the passing of time when there was a charming lady at his side, and at the theatre he overlooked that by a certain hour he should have been back at the Naval College at Greenwich. Lieutenant X came round to see me in a terrible state. What was he to do? If he went back, he told me, he would be stopped at the gates by the sentries and he would have to give explanations, of which none he could think of would be adequate. If, on the other hand, he did not return there would be a court-martial, and he would be dismissed from the Service. Before him, whichever way he turned, was the blank ruin of his career and he disgraced in the eyes of his family. Well I don't know which of us actually suggested it, but it occurred to us that if only he could

be disguised as an Admiral, he might easily get into the college! An Admiral had to keep no strict hours when absent from duty, and if only he could look and act the part, the sentries would let him pass and ask no awkward questions. So in a very few minutes I was busy treating him with all the arts of "make-up." Certainly the addition of a pointed beard made a most effective disguise, and it answered splendidly, for at Greenwich he marched boldly through the gates to the dutiful salutes of the sentries. The situation was saved. For my own part I felt that I had done something to save a career, and as it happens, the romantic young friend of those days is now a real Admiral, and a very well-known and popular one, in His Majesty's Navy.

Numerous are the stories told about my friend and colleague for so many years—Fred Billington. In temperament and character we were entirely opposites, but there was scarcely one disagreement throughout our long companionship, during which we played together almost continuously. He was a Yorkshireman, and before he joined the company, with which he remained for thirty-seven years, he was in the office of the Water Board at Huddersfield. The whole of his stage career was spent with these operas.

It was not everybody who understood Billington. Sometimes he could be uncommonly moody and gruff, and if he did not feel in the mood to talk, he would make it clear that he wanted no introductions to one's own acquaintances. But under the rugged surface he was a fine-hearted fellow, who lived life heartily and lived it well, and nothing pleased him better, apart from a game of golf, than to sit and gossip with those whose society he liked.

One day he invited three of us to a round of golf, and it being a cold morning, he told us that he was ordering "a good beef-steak and kidney pudding."

Well, when we had finished the game and returned to the club-house, in came that steaming pudding. Billington looked at it long and earnestly. "It won't do for four," he reflected. Then a pause. "It would make a poor meal for three. There's scarcely enough for two. I'll tell you what. I'll have it—and you three can have chops." And that is just what we did.

Billington had a gift of robust eloquence, and unless one was accustomed to it, the freedom with which it flowed from his tongue was most embarrassing. He was playing a clergyman one day at golf. The cleric, whenever he made a bad shot, invariably relieved his feelings by exclaiming, "Oh, Pickles! Pickles!" Language of this kind in Billington's ears was exceedingly trying, and as if determined to give the parson a lesson, he came out with a string of oaths of the richest and most vivid description. "Thank you very much, Mr. Billington," said the clergyman, smilingly, "thank you very much!" Evidently those were the sort of words which, but for respect for his cloth, he wanted to say!

One day he went out for a match with a bishop. The club officials, knowing how exuberant his language could be, were on tenter-hooks of anxiety all the time they were out, and on their return the secretary hastened to take the episcopal visitor apart. "Mr. Billington, the actor, you know, my lord," he explained. "I hope his language didn't shock you." "Oh, no!" responded the bishop, diplomatically, "he did once call on the Almighty, but otherwise his language was beyond reproach."

Dear old Billington! Earlier in life he had been with the company on a South African tour, and the wide spaces, the ample life and the boundless opportunities of that vast country appealed to him irresistibly. South Africa had a "call" for him, and he had ambitions, when the time came for him to retire, to settle there. That ambition was never realised. Only the night

before he died, while we were in our dressing-room, he surprised me with the question, "How would you like to die, Harry?"

From a man so little inclined to brood on the morbid the question was strange. I told him I didn't know. I had never, I told him, thought it out, and didn't intend to either.

"But if you had to die," he insisted, "how would you prefer to go?"

"Oh! I don't know," I retorted. "Anyhow, we're not going to die just yet."

"Well," was his answer, "if I had my way, it would be a good dinner, a bottle of wine, a good cigar, a good joke, and—pop-off!"

It must have been a premonition. The very next day, while still apparently in perfect health, he left Cambridge to keep a luncheon engagement with Mr. Rupert D'Oyly Carte at the Great Eastern Hotel, London. The intention was that he should be back for the night performance. With the lunch they had a bottle of wine, and afterwards, over cigars, they talked, with many a hearty joke in between. Then he went out into the foyer and collapsed. It was at least good to think that the passing of my dear old friend was free from pain or suffering.

Fred Billington's end must have been hastened by a sequence of events during the war. Strangely enough, when we were at Sheffield, the town was visited by a Zeppelin raid, and there was another raid when we were at Hull, a third when we were at Kennington, and a fourth when we were at Wimbledon. Billington's nerves, naturally enough, were very upset. Wherever we went the Zepps seemed to be after us. "Do you know, Harry," he said, at last, "I believe that bally Kaiser has got our tour." What he meant, of course, was that our list of bookings had got into the hands of the All-Highest, and that he thought, apparently, that



if he could wipe out the Gilbert and Sullivan operas he would be able to break the spirit of England. Looked at in that way, the attention paid to us, whether intentional or not, was certainly flattering.

Worse than those raids, however, was the Dublin rebellion, into which we ran at Easter, 1916. We should have opened there on the Bank Holiday. In point of fact we did not play one single night. Fred and I were at the Gresham Hotel. The very first day we were not allowed out at all, for we were in the very centre of hostilities, and no one could go into the street except at his peril. Chafing under the restraint, I did at last attempt to venture out, though feeling that there were too many bullets about for things to be healthy. Opposite the Gresham, at the door of the Irish Club, I saw the well-known figure of the Dublin Coroner, Mr. Friery. I rushed across to him, and it was because I spoke to him, I believe, that I was ever able to get back alive. Mr. Friery, with his top hat and frock-coat, was an easily distinguished citizen, and neither the military nor the rebels would have been likely to fire at him deliberately. "You ought never to have come across," he told me, and as it happened, the very same thought had occurred to me.

Conditions in the hotel itself were the reverse of pleasant, what with the noise of the firing outside and bullets shooting through our own windows, though these were shuttered and protected as far as possible. Our food stocks commenced to run low—by the end of the week's siege we had only biscuits and ham—and the strain on the larder was added to by the arrival of scores of visitors who had been turned out of the Metropole Hotel. They had been told to take their valuables with them, and it was remarkable how, in the fright of such an emergency, men would grasp the first thing that came into their hands and leave their real treasures

behind. One man rushed over clutching two dirty collars, while another had a bath-towel, which he had picked up, it seemed, instead of a dressing-gown. English jockeys who were there for the race week hurried over holding a saddle case.

Our anxieties were increased in the meanwhile by the systematic operations of the military around Eden Quay. One by one the houses were being demolished by shell-fire, and in one of the threatened houses, as we knew, were many of the ladies of the company. To get to them was impossible. Luckily for them a sergeant on signalling duty heard their cries, and at once rushed to their help. "Who are you?" he shouted. "What are you doing here?" "We're the D'Oyly Carte," they answered. The D'Oyly Carte name worked like magic. Signalling to the gunners to cease fire, the sergeant hurried them out and through the streets, where sniping was going on at every corner, and took them to a police-station for safety.

All the other members of the company had more or less miraculous escapes. Leicester Tunks, Frederick Hobbs, Leo Sheffield, and several others lost all their luggage, but fortunately none sustained any more serious mishap. From the good people of Dublin we received every possible kindness, but as you will imagine, we were thankful when we heard that there were berths on a boat to take us back to Holyhead.

I have not, of course, told all my experiences of that awful week, though in memory these still linger vividly. But one of the things I remember best of all was a quaint remark of Billington's. Outside there was still the noise of the fighting, and most persistent of all was the crack! crack! crack! of a sniper somewhere near our own building. "Oh, Harry," said poor Fred, in utter weariness, "I do wish that bally woodpecker would chuck it!"

## VIII

### HOBBIES OF A SAVOYARD

*Luckless Ventures in Theatrical Management—Farces that Failed—New Outlets for Enthusiasm—Boldness in the Poultry-run—Captain Corcoran and the Crooks—Floricultural Topsy-turvydom—The Flowers that Did Not Bloom in the Spring—Recreations that Remain—Prize Costumes at Fancy-dress Balls—The Big-game Shot and the Tiger.*

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LIKE "Mr. Punch" in another connection, I have a sound piece of advice for those who may ever think of embarking on theatrical management. "Don't!" I say this after bitter experience. It was not only that my gallant show as a boy ended disastrously. This, of course, was itself a bad omen, and it ought to have taught me that public taste is fickle and that the gamble of theatrical management is surrounded by all kinds of perils. A West-End audience may be just as capricious and as hard to please as my audience of village lads in the garden.

My first real venture, a London one, was at the Criterion Theatre, which, with a few others, I took on lease from Sir Charles Wyndham, in order to produce "The Wild Rabbit." It was by Mr. George Arliss, who has since given up writing plays in order to act them, and he is now a "star" in America. It was one of those rollicking farces which, one would have thought, would have filled the house every night. I was playing elsewhere at the time, but we got together a really excellent company, amongst whom were the Broughs. But fate was against us from the very beginning. The production coincided with a heat wave, which is bound to be disastrous to all but the best of shows, and one of the facetious complaints of the newspaper critics was

that they had to come to the theatre when the temperature was eighty in the shade.

"The Wild Rabbit" survived three weeks only. It drew £34 the first night—and that was the high-water-mark in the matter of receipts. One night the box-office took a mere £8. Seeing that the expenses were about £600 a week, it will be understood that the failure was severe and complete, and in most circumstances one lesson of the kind would have been enough. However, a number of friends of mine had secured the rights of "Melnotte," an operatic version of that good old comedy, "The Lady of Lyons." They did not ask me to invest any capital, but they invited me to let them have the use of my name in booking a tour for the provinces, as they themselves were unknown to theatrical managers. Upon that basis an eight weeks' tour was arranged. Gathering together about sixty artistes all told, they rehearsed them and bought all the scenery, and were almost on the eve of the first production of "Melnotte." Then one fine morning there came the thunderbolt. They told me that all the money they had put into the venture had gone! It had gone before the company had even left London. What was to be done? Seemingly their idea was centred in how speedily they could cut their losses and abandon the venture. Such a thing to me was impossible. With my name attached to the tour, a breach of faith with so many provincial managers would have been a serious blow to my reputation, and apart from that, the fact that sixty of my fellow artistes were in danger of being thrown out of work compelled me to take both a moral and a financial obligation on my shoulders and run the show myself. I could only hope for the best and wait patiently for the report of my manager that the tour was flourishing.

That report never came. Every week I had to post a big cheque to cover the deficit on the takings, and every week made it clearer that, although the play itself was a good one, it was a thoroughly bad speculation. Something certainly was amiss. I could not leave London myself, and the only alternative was to offer a friend his railway fare and expenses and ask him to run into the country see the play and tell me frankly what was amiss. "Harry," said my friend, very meaningly, "I've never done you a bad turn. I've seen it—*once*." Once was enough!

Eight weeks saw the end of "Melnotte." From the first it was a forlorn hope, and in any case it was impossible to run a company successfully unless one could be on the spot to superintend the production. The only satisfaction I had out of it—and I admit it with some feelings of pride—was that of standing by my fellow-professionals, and, at whatever cost to myself, "playing the game." I have never made—and never shall be lured to make—another plunge into management. The risks are too great.

Sometimes I am inclined to contrast my bad luck in these business ventures with the good fortune of a friend who once asked me for a loan of £90. He was in humble circumstances then, but he had a little money of his own and his ambition was to buy the licence of a public-house in Holloway. I lent him the cash, and later on he came to repay me, with many thanks for thus giving him his opportunity. Years afterwards we met again. Upon the basis of that little public-house he had built a comfortable fortune, for he was a director of a brewery concern, had a big interest in various industrial undertakings, and eventually became a well-known Member of Parliament. "You have been my mascot," he said—and there have been others who for various reasons have said the very same thing!



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
The Lord Chancellor in "Iolanthe."



If I had but known. During my early struggles, I had a room in a cheap lodging-house in Bath, where, along the side of the wall of the passage, was nailed a painted canvas, the centre figures being three women, above them, leaning on a stone wall, a man with a beard. I was struck with the wonderful colours of the draperies and flesh, and asked the landlady how she came by such a striking piece of work, nailed to the wall as it was with great iron spikes. She told me it was there in her grandfather's time, and had been put up to hide the dirty wall. I asked her what she would take for it. She said I could have it if I would have the broken and dirty wall done up. This I could not afford to do. Some years after I saw in the papers, "Discovery of a Titians at a common lodging-house at Bath. Sold in London for £30,000!" Oh!!!

"Hallo, Lytton, how are you doing, who are you doing—or is it the old story, someone has done you?" These words were accompanied with a slap on the back and a cheery laugh from a theatrical manager who is to-day one of our most successful. As a matter of fact I was looking and feeling a bit down, having for many weeks been paying anything from £150 to £200 a week to keep a theatre open, but failure was my reward.

My cheery friend proposed I should join forces with him, say for £200, but I felt I had had enough theatrical speculation. Had I had the money and perhaps pluck at the time, I should have had a fortune of anything from £40,000 to £50,000 to-day. I shall not give my friend's name, as these income tax people have such a habit of prying into other people's business.

In my anxiety to "get rich quick," in my time I have bought strange things: "a gold mine," in Alaska. Such a nice man sold it to me. Wanted me to have all the gold in it, he was so fond of me and my work. All



I had to do was to give him £100, which I did. He then bought me quite a nice cigarette-case and gave the company a very lovely supper—which at the time I was too ill to attend—but anyway I paid. There was no gold mine, and the nice man's clothes were found on a bank by the river. Don't shed tears, dear reader, he did not drown, only disappeared.

Once I met a "dear friend"—you may know the kind yourself—who was terribly anxious that I should be "in" with him in a rich gold mine in South Nigel. He brought some nuggets to show me, and they were so plentiful, he told me, that he had picked these from the top of the ground. Evidently I must have been a particularly credulous person, because he got a good deal of my money, whereas all I got was experience!

Yet another friend, but this one was really a nice man, and very rich. "I want to build a theatre," said he, "and have seen a real good site for one. What do you say if I build it for you?" I was so staggered with the offer (I was very young) that I said "No," but I had a friend whose name was a household word—the theatre was built, the friend receives a profit rental that would keep me in affluence in my old age.

There is an old saying, "Once bit twice shy"—but not, dear reader, in my case. On I went trying to get rich—breweries, tin mines, rubber, electro-plate works, oils in Russia—all up when I bought, all down when I wanted to sell.

The luck of the game.

Five per cent. now is good enough for me, but how late to come to that decision.

Where hobbies are concerned my luck always seems to be appalling. I have had a mania for turning my hands to all sorts of things. It began, I remember, with my determination to commence breeding poultry, and having made up my mind to this, it had to be done very

thoroughly. I bought quite a number of chickens and wired them within a very small space. The poor things had nothing like enough room, and they began to get bad-tempered, to fight one another, and to pull out their feathers. Further, having pulled out their rivals' feathers and found the oil at the roots very tasty, they set to in earnest, and before long there was not one bird with a feather left in the place. They were all bald! A more miserable collection of freaks you could never imagine. With characteristic humour Dan Leno sent me a bottle of Tatcho for them!—a well-known Hair Restorer at that time,

From hens to ducks was not a far cry. So I bought a number of ducks' eggs, hatched them in an incubator, and at last decided that it was time the little wretches had their first swim. I accordingly carried them down to a pond to put them in. Alas! once more for my amateur enthusiasm! The ducklings were too young for that, and they got cramp and died.

Nothing daunted, I turned now to bulldogs, and in order to do things well I bought seven big kennels, complete with iron gates. They would have done credit to a big estate, where breeding is done on up-to-date lines, and were quite out-of-place in my suburban garden at Chiswick. To begin with we could not get the kennels into the garden. Four hours they were on the street pavement while we cogitated just how we were going to get them round to the back of the house, and it was only after a police-officer had intervened with an order to remove them forthwith, because they were a nuisance, that we found that if there is a will, there must be a way.

"Captain Corcoran" was the name I gave to my best bulldog, and as he brought me luck, I was glad I had chosen that name from "Pinafore." He was a sturdy fellow, the winner of very many championships,

and his progeny have since also carried off valuable prizes. But even my one successful hobby was doomed to be blighted. One day two crafty-looking individuals came to my house and said they wanted to see me about a dog. They were Americans, and they wanted, they told me, to buy "Captain Corcoran." I told them I would not sell him—not at any price. They found it a waste of time to try to fix up a deal. "Well," they said as their parting shot, "we're going to have him, anyhow." Within a day or two police officers called to warn me that two expert dog thieves had taken rooms in the neighbourhood, and I was forced to the conclusion, much as I disliked it, that I must dispose of "Captain Corcoran." Later on I commenced to breed daschunds and Borzois, but somehow I did not care for the "doggy" people with whom I had to mix, and the end was that I gave up dogs altogether.

Then I determined I would venture into the more tranquil art of floriculture. I would have my own flower garden, and what was more, everything in it should be done by myself. My wife, shrewd woman, said nothing. It was a case of "leave him alone, and he'll play for hours." From Holland I ordered an immense number of bulbs, and put them into the ground. Months went by, but not a sign was there of my hyacinths. I pondered deeply over my manual of useful hints for gardening. Watered them? Yes. Raked the soil? Yes. What was wrong? Certain it was that *these* flowers never bloomed in the spring!

Eventually, I saw a tiny yellow spike creeping out of the earth, but the colour and nature of it were not "according to plan." At last I called in a gardener. "Oh," he declared, doing his best to soften the blow, "you've planted the bulbs upside down." And so I had! The poor little shoots had to dig down into the soil before they could curye round and creep into the

light. Nearly everything in that unfortunate garden had been planted upside down.

Friends of mine chaffed me unmercifully over that topsy-turvy exploit. When they came to my house they would turn all the ornaments upside down. Before I entered the room they would reverse the chairs, the settee and anything they could lay their hands upon, and then they would explain themselves by saying "We thought you liked things like that, old man. The bulbs you know. We've just heard about the bulbs."

Well, after the failure with the hens, the ducks, and the flowers, there seemed only one other diversion to try, and that was photography. Even that did not survive very long, nor yet did my attempt to cultivate mushrooms in my cellar, a craze that threatened very literally to get the place into bad odour. But there are two recreations to which I still remain faithful, and they, after all, are worth all the rest put together. One is golf and the other painting. Golf is a great game for keeping the actor fit and his mind clear for his work, and it is very popular in our profession. Now and then, too, a day with the palette and easel is a wonderful pleasure to me, and seldom do I take up the brush without a thought of poor old Trood and his studio at Chelsea.

One diversion at least in which I have had my share of success has been in the fancy dress balls at Covent Garden. Once I took the first prize with a representation of Nelson, the costume of which was copied in every detail from the uniform of the great seaman preserved in Greenwich Museum, and I remember that my entry was signalled by Dan Godfrey's orchestra striking up "'Twas in Trafalgar Bay." Then I took the chief honours with a wonderful bust of Nero, in connection with which I received enormous help from my old friend the celebrated sculptor, Albert Toft. From my waist

downward I was encased in what appeared to be a blood-marble pedestal. My face was whitened, my eyes were closed, and my brow was adorned with the laurel leaf, and when the lights were focussed on my rigid figure and the plaster frame it was acclaimed as a marvelously clever imitation of the statue of the great Roman Emperor. Once again I took the first prize at Covent Garden with the subject of the Knave of Clubs. The costume was a silk one, half black and half white, and on it were fastened the names of all the well-known clubs in London. Even the members of the Beef Steak Club found that their institution had not been overlooked—and that this title appeared on the costume in an appropriate place!

Nowadays, when we are on tour, it is very pleasant to be able to travel by motor-car instead of by train. With my Austin-20 car I have now covered well over 42,000 miles, and probably the only occasion when I deliberately exceeded the speed limit was once outside Plymouth. A doctor with a troublesome car was held up in the roadway. When I drew up and asked whether I could help him, he told me he had been a quarter-of-an-hour trying to get the engine to go, though he was due at a very critical operation some miles away. It was, indeed, a matter of life and death, and in my own car he was very speedily taken to the hospital. It was in the same district, I think, that I gave a "lift" to a man who was footsore and weary, and who said at the end of the journey, "I suppose you won't tell the guv'nor about this, will you?" Evidently he had mistaken me for somebody's chauffeur!

Some years ago, when I was setting out from my home at Chiswick, I was held up by a 'bus bound for Twickenham. It was crowded already, and the conductor had to refuse a poor old woman who wanted to

board it, and who was very distressed, because she had a job at Twickenham, "and if I don't get there," she told me, "they'll think I'm too old for work and they won't want me again." The problem was easily solved. I offered to take her where she was going. She had never been in a motor-car before, and in trying to stammer her thanks, she asked me to tell her my name "so that I shall never forget you." So I handed her my card—she certainly did not know anything about me or what was my profession—and went on my way. Judge of my surprise when, soon after the end of the war, I found that that old lady had bequeathed to me the two little rooms and all the furniture that had been her poor, but neat and cosy, home at Hammersmith. Luckily, I heard of a demobilised soldier who, with his wife and child, was urgently in need of a shelter, and it was a great pleasure to me to be able to turn this touching legacy to such good account.

Speaking of hobbies, I don't think I knew a more curious taste than that of an old friend of mine who was a big-game shot and traveller, and who had a miniature zoo of his own at his home at Derby. Once, when the company was playing in that town, he invited me to go and stay the night with him after the performance, and in his library we sat chatting until the early hours of the morning. He told me many graphic stories about his expeditions into strange lands, about the tigers and elephants he had shot, and about his marvellous escapes. One story was about a faithful servant of his, a powerfully-built black, who stood right in front of an infuriated wounded elephant, which trampled on him and killed him, as the poor fellow doubtless knew would be the case, though he was ready to chance all so that his master might be protected. I remember that my friend, having told me this incident, added, "They are the greatest men on God's earth, are these blacks."

"Just half-a-minute," then said the explorer. Listening to those strange adventures in the jungle had already set my nerves on edge, and to be left alone in that dimly-lit room, with everything outside and inside it silent and still, was really uncanny. I heard my host walk along the corridor, open one or two doors, and apparently enter the garden. He had left me alone in that house! In a few moments I heard an unnatural tread in the corridor. Pit-pat, pit-pat! My eyes almost sprang out of my head. Pit-pat, pit-pat. Nearer and nearer it came until at last into the room there sauntered a—tiger! My friend walked in behind it.

"For God's sake take it away," I screamed, drawing my feet up into the chair and expecting every second the beast would pounce, "Take it away!" The tiger was really only a cub, but coming like an apparition into that room, it seemed to be the biggest and most ferocious and most ghastly sight on earth. Large beads of perspiration were on my forehead, my heart was beating itself out of my body, and through my mind flashed the countless sins of my youth. My last hours had come. "Take it away," I yelled, again and again, "it will tear us to pieces."

Now I think of it, the tiger did not really look as if it had much of an appetite, or if it had, the idea of making a tough meal of an actor did not appeal to its palate. The hunter tried to assure me that the beast was "quite all right." It flopped down by his side, and as he stroked it, the cub purred in a manner which, to me at all events, was not at all pleasant. "I know just how long you can keep them," my host explained. "This one will be harmless for some time yet. Then it will be dangerous. It is quite all right to-night. Come and stroke it!"

Not I! So long as the tiger remained there I kept cringed up in my seat on the other side of the room,



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
Ko Ko in "The Mikado."





and mighty thankful I was when he had taken his strange pet away. I've an old-fashioned notion that a library is not the happiest place for a menagerie. I heard that just a month afterwards the beast did, in fact, turn on the big-game shot, and his arm was terribly ripped. He must have trusted it too long.

## IX

### GILBERT AND SULLIVAN

*World-wide Fame of the Operas—The Secrets of their Charm—Sullivan's Music and the Popular Taste—Gilbert and the Englishman—Stage Figures That Are True to National Type—the Germans and "H.M.S. Pinafore"—Characters that Mirror Ourselves—Gilbert's Versatility—Pedigree of the Operas—Practical Hints for Amateurs—The Importance of the First Entrance—Studying the Art of Make-up—A Splendid Heritage of Humour and Song.*

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THE Gilbert and Sullivan public are said to number three millions. Exactly how this figure is arrived at I cannot say, but it is presumed to represent those who make it a point of honour to see the operas whenever they possibly can, who are familiar with all the music and the songs, and who lose no chance of making others as enthusiastic as they are. Literally they are to be found the whole world over—from China to Peru—and the operas are as successful in Australia and America as they are in the United Kingdom. I was told once of an Englishman, exiled in the wilds of China, who had an audience of Celestials listening at his garden gate while he was warbling to himself "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes!"

What a wonderful thing it is that plays which are all well over thirty years old should have such a faithful following! Clearly there must be something exceptional about them, some magnetic force that draws the multitudes to them, some elixir that gives to them the freshness of eternal youth. Imitators have tried hard to capture the secret of their sweet simplicity. That they have failed so far to do so is a misfortune. The Savoy operas still stand alone, unchallenged either by any changing in popular taste or by the passage of

time, though if there were more of them it would be good for the public that loves such honest, wholesome enjoyment. It would also be good for the stage. What is the secret?

Sullivan's music often reminds me of a beautiful garden. No attempt is there here to picture in bold orchestral strokes the frowning peaks, the expansive landscapes or the scenes of pomp and splendour. The canvas is ever a miniature one. Each melody is comparable to a lily or a daffodil—just as unpretentious and just as charming—while the whole has the fragrance of the flowers that bloom in the spring. We love this music because it soothes and delights. It is not too "intellectual." We appreciate it as a free and easy distraction, just as we appreciate a popular novel, though we may have high-brow moments when we peer into our Darwin and Spencer. Sullivan's greatest virtue was that he wrote music that was "understood of the people."

British folk, as we know, are easy going. We are a little too inclined to doff the thinking-cap at the first opportunity. Speaking generally, we are not a studious race, and we don't want to be bothered with "problems." Sullivan's music is never in the problem style—the problem of intricate chords and modern progressions—and just as certainly does it avoid the strident atrocities of the modern ragtime type. It is transparent and simple. It sparkles like the stream in the sunshine, and it is always joyous, buoyant and happy. We want more of such music. Give the people more of these delicate melodies—frankly popular as they are, and yet supremely good music—and into their own lives will enter much of the same romantic warmth and content.

All this shows how Sullivan in his music was perfectly and typically British. What about Gilbert? In his

way I think he was the same. British audiences, he knew, did not want either abstruse plots or out-and-out farces, but they did like to be indulged with gentle ripples of laughter. They did not care over-much for the incongruous, but they did love rollicking, good-natured burlesque. And Gilbert was a master of burlesque. Endless arrows are released from his bow, but they hit the mark without disfiguring it, for the tips are not dipped in poison. The Briton can laugh with the best when his own weaknesses and foibles are held up to satire. Certain people would go at once into a tantrum. The Germans, as we know, could never understand "H.M.S. Pinafore." They said it was impossible! No doubt to them it *was* impossible. Gilbert was making play with Britain's proudest possession—her Navy. Well, the Germans could never have produced a Gilbert of their own in any case, but imagine the enormity of the crime if such an one had written a play caricaturing the omnipotent German War Lords and the old German Army!

Whatever the national costume in which the Gilbert characters are dressed, and however remote the age to which these costumes belong, we know at once that the garb is the purest "camouflage." We have met their like in present-day London or Glasgow or Liverpool. What a lot of folk in real life we know with the same little oddities! *The Duke of Plaza-Toro*, though described as a Spanish grandee, is really very much an Englishman. He sings, too, about the human weakness for small titles and orders, and we know that that is not an exclusive weakness of the Venetians or the Baratarians in "The Gondoliers." The cap can find a head to fit it much nearer home. Then there is the character of *Sir Joseph Porter* in "Pinafore." No doubt he is an exaggerated political type, but he is not exaggerated, after all, beyond recognition.

"The Yeomen of the Guard" is, of all operas ever written, the one most essentially English. The Elizabethan setting is there, and so is the happy spirit of old Merrie England. Slightly, perhaps, it may be a drama, but it brings to the surface the tears of gentle melancholy only. That also stamps it as typically British. *Colonel Fairfax*, under the shadow of the executioner's axe, does not strike a dramatic pose and tell us that it is a far, far better thing he is going to do than he has ever done. Not a bit! In effect, he says it's rather hard luck, but there it is anyhow, and after all things might be very much worse. A British officer always was ready to face death with a smile. Nor does *Jack Point* himself, the most lovable of characters, make a parade of his grief. The burning, aching pain is smothered almost to the end beneath the outward jesting, and when his honest heart breaks there is no murmur against the cruelty of fate, nor any cry of vengeance upon the rival who has won *Elsie Maynard*.

Yes, we British people can often see ourselves in these characters as if in a mirror, and it is probably due to this, together with the exquisite blend of inimitable music and wit, that the popularity of these operas is so strong and enduring. Stage "puppets" as they may be, they do show us a lot about both our virtues and follies, but rather more about our follies, because as a race we are notoriously shy of our praises being sung! They are always ready to own up to their weaknesses in some capital song. So like the self-deprecating British! Like the rest of us, too, they are for ever getting into some dilemma or other, and they disentangle themselves without excitement or flurry. Each point is made without the banging of drums or the sounding of trumpets. Contrast this with Wagner, who makes a terrible fuss about the merest trifle, and works up his orchestration in a manner that might suggest that

the heavens were falling. Whether we like our music like this must be a matter of taste and individual discretion. Here in Gilbert and Sullivan at all events we have common sense—for there can be common sense even in the ridiculous—and a tranquillising atmosphere. In a busy, workaday world, with its ceaseless nervous and physical strain, it is surely a grateful attribute, a pleasant diversion between the burdens of one day and those of the next !

Sir William Gilbert, as I have said before, had a master mind as a playwright. Every opera he wrote had a definite and an interesting plot, and a plot which had, moreover, a purpose. “H.M.S. Pinafore,” as we know, was a shrewd shaft aimed at some of the absurdities of our political life, though I say this without being in any way a politician myself ! In “Patience” he held up to ridicule the æsthetic craze of the ‘eighties. With “Iolanthe” we enter the fantastic field, and to me there is always something uncommonly whimsical in the idea that Parliament is ruled by the fairies, who thus must be the real rulers of England. “Princess Ida” was a clever anticipation of the women’s movement, though it is well-known that Gilbert took the outlines of the story from Tennyson. Then “The Mikado” transports to the romantic and picturesque land of Japan. “Ruddigore” was intended to be a travesty on the melodramatic stage. Following this came an historical play, designed to show his gifts in a new, more serious and no less successful light. I refer, of course, to “The Yeomen of the Guard.” Then “The Gondoliers” carried us to beautiful Venice, whilst last of all were “Utopia Limited,” which I trust will soon be revived, and “The Grand Duke.” It is remarkable that so wide a range could be covered in one series of plays.

Gilbert, at an O.P. Club dinner in 1906, admitted

his "indebtedness to the author of the 'Bab Ballads,' from whom I have so unblushingly cribbed." The diligent student of the ballads and the operas will find many evidences of the development of ideas from the chrysalis to the butterfly stage. I have to thank Mr. Robert Bell for the following notes—confirmed and amplified by Gilbert during his lifetime—on the pedigree of a few of the more popular operas :—

"H.M.S. Pinafore"	..	..	"Captain Reece,"	"The Baby's Vengeance,"	"General John,"	"Lieutenant-Colonel Flare,"	"The Bum-boat Woman's Story,"	"Joe Golightly,"	"Little Oliver."
"The Yeomen of the Guard"	..	..	"Annie Protheroe,"	"To Phoebe."					
"Iolanthe"	..	..	..	"The Fairy Curate,"	"The Periwinkle Girl."				
"Patience"	..	..	..	"The Rival Curates."					

"H.M.S. Pinafore," it will be seen, owed more to the ballads than did any of the later operas, and it will be noticed that *Captain Corcoran*, with his solicitude for his crew and his carefully moderate language, was clearly of the stock of *Captain Reece*, of "The Mantelpiece," who

"Did all that lay within him to  
Promote the comfort of his crew;  
A feather bed had every man  
Warm slippers and hot-water can,  
Brown Windsor from the captain's store,  
A valet, too, to every four."

—an example of unselfishness to be compared in the other branch of the Service only with the altruism of "Lieutenant-Colonel Flare." The main theme of the opera—the babies changed in their cradles—was a great favourite with Gilbert. In the ballads it appears in "General John" and "The Baby's Vengeance," which latter poem may have suggested, moreover, certain



details in "Ruddigore." The origin of *Robin Oakapple's* bashfulness may possibly be traced back to "The Married Couple," in which the pair were betrothed in infancy, as also happens in "Princess Ida."

"Iolanthe" has an obvious resemblance to "The Fairy Curate." In both a fairy marries a mortal, with the result in one case of the curate, *Georgie*, and in the other the Arcadian shepherd, *Strephon*. Then we are bound to notice how the feud of the two poets in "Patience" is modelled on the emulation of the *Rev. Clayton Hooper* and the *Rev. Hopley Porter* in "The Rival Curates." Indeed, the parallel between the ballad and the opera was originally so complete that in the opera the dragoons were curates, and *Bunthorne* and *Grosvenor* clergymen! Sir William, however, began to doubt whether it was good taste to hold up the clergy to a certain amount of ridicule, and so he changed the principals into æsthètes, and the curates into dragoons.

Coming to "The Yeomen of the Guard" we find that *Wilfred Shadbolt*, with his anecdotes of the prison cells and the torture chamber, had a prototype in the jailor in "Annie Protheroe." In both a condemned man is reprieved and enabled to outwit his rival for the love of a lady. "Were I thy Bride" is also a song with an obvious affinity to the ballad, "To Phœbe." So we might continue to trace in the ballads ideas which the playwright turned to the happiest account in the operas. Strangely enough, "The Mikado" is the opera which best keeps its secrets, and one searches the poems in vain for anything in the nature of a "pedigree."

Lucky is the actor or actress who secures an engagement in these operas at the outset of his or her career on the stage. The Savoy tradition which Gilbert and Sullivan founded was, of course, entirely different to anything which had preceded it, and the great feature

of this new school was the insistence that was and still is placed on clear enunciation, distinct vocal phrasing, and refinement of manner and gesture. The beginner who is trained on these lines is thus taught the essentials of genuine artistry, and it is also a great advantage to a new-comer that, early in his professional life, he has played in pieces which have such an infectious spirit about them and before audiences that are always so ready with encouragement. By the management itself good work is invariably recognised, and it is always possible, as has happened in my own case, for one to rise from the chorus itself to the principal parts.

Gilbert and Sullivan's works are now given by hundreds of amateur societies all the year round, and often we hear that parties of those who are going to play in them have travelled some distance to see us, and so to gather notes for their own performances. Scattered about these pages are many practical hints for these amateur players. From an "old hand" they may be of some service, not merely because they are drawn from my own long experience, but because many of these points were given me by Gilbert himself and by great actors like Irving. It will be useful, I think, if I now summarise and amplify these suggestions, which are applicable chiefly to those who are to play in these operas, but which in a general way may be helpful to all amateur and young professional performers. Here they are:—

1. Study your part very thoroughly beforehand and when on the stage forget all about yourself, and live that part entirely. Concentrate all your thoughts upon it, and if it is a whimsical part, see that you get the right atmosphere before you begin.

2. Speak clearly and deliberately. Never forget the man at the back of the gallery, and so long as your enunciation is distinct, your words will reach him

without any need for shouting. Special care should be taken to phrase clearly when singing.

3. Be perfectly natural in your actions and gestures. The secret of this is, whether you are actually speaking or not, to wrap yourself up in your part and in the play and so save yourself from being troubled with self-consciousness.

4. Give your audience credit for humorous perception. Gilbert's wit, in other words, is such that the actor must not force his lines through fear, as it were, that the people in front will otherwise not be intelligent enough to "see the joke." Indeed, the more serious and intense he is in many cases, the more oblivious he pretends to be to the absurdity of what he is saying, the quainter and more delightful is the effect on the other side of the footlights.

5. Exceptional instances apart, the actor who is speaking or being spoken to, or who is singing a song, should stand well to the front of the stage. Not only does this let you make the best use of your voice, but it helps you, what is more important, to rivet the attention of the audience.

6. Keep up a keen personal interest in the play. If you are in the chorus, your job is not solely to help in the singing and to show off a picturesque costume, but to assist in focussing the interest on the central incident. If, on the other hand, you are listless and stare about the theatre, it is bound to rob the whole performance of freshness and spontaneity.

7. The Gilbert and Sullivan atmosphere, as I have said several times elsewhere, is "repose." This is impossible if every member of the company—and even the leading principal himself—indulges in little mannerisms liable to take the audience's eye from the central point.

8. Never forget that a company, so far from being

divided into principals and chorus, is really one big family, and success depends on one and all "pulling together." Still less should the principals forget what they owe to the chorus for loyally backing them up, and a little kindly appreciation, a word of encouragement from themselves, as the more experienced players, to those who are anxious to learn, goes a mighty long way.

Now that the old stock companies have become almost things of the past, our amateur operatic societies should be recognised as one of the best recruiting fields for theatrical talent, and it is a fact that from their ranks many great artistes have sprung. I myself have seen numbers of these amateur shows, and in most of them there have been two or three performers who, with work and experience, could take a creditable place on the professional stage. For this reason I am anxious to give them all the advice it is in my power to give. First and foremost, therefore, I should insist that before any words are memorised the part itself must be thoroughly studied, so that one knows exactly what the author intends and just what sort of figure one has to depict. Especially have I made it my aim, on my first entrance in any part, to let the audience see just what the character is, whether a comedian, a tragedian, a lover, a fool, or a "fop." *Feel* that you are actually one of these, and especially when you make your first entry, and the battle is half won already. You will then have something of what people variously call "magnetism" or "personality" or "atmosphere." This *feeling* of your part at the first entrance is of vital importance, and as far as you can, you must try to keep it up right through the play.

Take the case of *Jack Point*. From the moment he enters, the audience should know the manner of man that he is, and he must win their sympathy immediately. He is a poor strolling player who has been dragged from

pillar to post. Footsore and weary though he is, *Jack Point* is anxious to please the crowd who have roughly chased him and *Elsie Maynard* in, for if he fails them have they not threatened to duck him in the nearest pond? *Jack* and *Elsie* are no ordinary players. In Elizabethan times the street dancer was a familiar character. The Merry-man and his maid, however, tell us that they can sing *and* dance, too, a wonderful accomplishment. All this and more is made clear on their first entry. It should be the same in the interpretation of all the other parts.

When the *Duke of Plaza-Toro* arrives, he must at once impress the audience that, although impecunious he still expects the deference due to birth and breeding. *Ko-Ko*, on the other hand, is a cheap tailor suddenly exalted to the rank of Lord High Executioner, and from *his* first entrance it is obvious that he was never brought up in the dignified ways of a Court. He tells the gentlemen of Japan that he is "much touched by this reception." Somehow one feels that that speech was written out for him when he received his appointment, that he has since recited it forty times a day, and that now the upstart is trying to make believe it is entirely extempore! Then there is *Sir Joseph Porter*. Whenever I play this rôle I do my best to cultivate a sense of immense self-importance. I do this, of course, whilst waiting my cue, but the effect of it should be seen on the stage. *Bunthorne's* first appearance should be done in such a way as to stamp him definitely for what he is—an affected *poseur*. The exaggeration may be relaxed a little afterwards—but it *must* be there at the beginning.

So long as one has studied one's part beforehand, particularly in regard to the nature of the first entry, the memorisation of the words becomes more or less easy. And amateurs ought to realise what a tremendous help to them it would be to practice their own

facial "make-up." Generally they leave that to an expert, but if they practised it themselves, they would find it a very fascinating, and certainly an important branch of the actor's profession. Many and many a time have I taken my pencils and colours, retired to some quiet room at home, and spent an afternoon experimenting in make-up. Notwithstanding that I have never played any Shakespearian characters, I have made up privately for dozens of them, and the practice has helped me in innumerable ways.

For instance, I used to be fond of making up as the hunchback *Richard the Third*, and I turned these experiments to account when I had to play the rôle of *King Gama*. Shakespeare's *Touchstone* also appealed to me, and having made up as this clown so often, I had many useful ideas when I came to do *Jack Point*. The deathly pallor of the poor jester at the end was contrived from many similar experiments. Setting photographs before me, I would make myself resemble the late Lord Roberts and the late Sir Evelyn Wood, and these were used as a model when I had to be *Major-General Stanley*. Several visits to the Law Courts gave me valuable hints for the *Lord Chancellor*. The *Duke of Plaza-Toro* was studied from an old print of a grandee. *Ko-Ko's* make up, which was bound to be a difficult one, was the outcome of a good deal of sketching on paper, particularly in regard to the treatment of the lines round the eyes. When Mrs. D'Oyly Carte first saw me as *Bunthorne*, she exclaimed, "How you do remind me of Whistler!" That was a compliment. It was from Whistler, of course, that this rôle was understood to be drawn, and so I was not loth to copy the poet's photograph, even to the white lock in his ample jet-black hair!

Yes, make-up well rewards one for all the time one spends in practising it, and many brother professionals

agree with me that the great past-masters of the art were the late Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and the late Wilson Barrett. With them, of course, make-up concerned not merely the face but the figure, and it was wonderful how Tree, to instance only two of his great parts, could adapt himself either to the portly and blustering *Falstaff* or to the lean and haggard *Svengali*. And Barrett, though ordinarily stocky of build, could appear at times as a towering, dominating personality. Seeing that these men were big theatrical figures, they were not compelled to sink their identities in the parts they were playing, and yet they were such great artistes that they always did so completely.

I close this book with a simple story of the different operas. This will, I am sure, be read with interest both by those who know them already and by those, the younger generation, who are growing up to know and love them too for what they are—a heritage of pure humour and song of which the nation may well be proud, and to which it will remain faithful as long as the spirit of laughter abides in its heart.

Dear are their melodies to England's heart,  
 Pure English is the fount from which they flow,  
 As frank and tender as was English art  
 In the rich times of Purcell, Arne and Blow ;  
 As English the libretto every whit,  
 Jests how well polished, whimsies how well said ;  
 True English humour, and true English wit,  
 Sword-sharp yet kindly, hearty yet well-bred.  
 Thus have they lasted, and out-last the years ;  
 Being in their fantasy to life so true,  
 So intermix't with laughter and with tears.  
 So gay, so wise, so old, and yet so new.  
 Long may they, living for our children's joy,  
 Renew the triumphs of the old Savoy !

# THE STORIES OF THE OPERAS

“TRIAL BY JURY.”

*Produced March 25th, 1875.*

GILBERT and SULLIVAN's fame was really based on a little comic opera called “Thespis.” It was produced by John Hollingshead at the Gaiety, and its success was so great that Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte was induced to invite them to collaborate again in the first of what we now know as the D'Oyly Carte operas, the dramatic cantata, “Trial by Jury.” Short and slender as it is, this opera has always been immensely popular, and it still appears regularly in the company's programmes. Gilbert, who had himself followed the law before he transferred his talents to the stage, took as his subject an imaginary breach of promise case between Edwin and Angelina. That it is a faithful picture of a court of law and of those who minister there one would never dare to suggest ! But as a very free and clever burlesque even those who follow the vocation of the wig and gown will admit its claims immediately.

When the curtain rises we see the interior of a court of justice, and the barristers, solicitors and jury are already in their places. The Usher, a functionary of the old school, at once proceeds to give some homely and informal advice to the jurymen, telling them to listen to the case with minds free from vulgar prejudice. With that he goes on to try to soften their masculine hearts over the plight of poor Angelina. When the defendant enters the twelve good men and true shake their fists



in his face, hail him as a "monster," and bid him "dread our damages." Edwin ventures to suggest that, as they are in the dark as to the merits of his case, these proceedings are strange. He tells how he once rapturously adored the lady, how she then began to bore him intensely, and how at last he became, "another's love-sick boy." The jury reflect that they, too, were rather inconstant in their own youthful days, but now that they are older and "shine with a virtue resplendent" they "haven't a scrap of sympathy with the defendant."

The Judge now takes his seat on the Bench. The genial soul, as a prelude to the duties of the day, confides how he rose to judicial eminence. For years he searched in vain for briefs, and then he found an easy escape from poverty by marrying a rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter. He would, his father-in-law said, soon get used to her looks, and in the meanwhile he promised to deluge him with briefs for the "Sessions and Ancient Bailey." By these means he prospered, and then he "threw over that rich attorney's elderly, ugly daughter." And now he is ready to try this present breach of promise of marriage.

Counsel for the plaintiff having taken his place, the jury are sworn well and truly to try the case, which they do by kneeling low down in the box and, with the exception of their upraised hands, quite out of sight. The plaintiff's arrival is heralded by that of a beautiful bevy of bridesmaids. The Judge, having taken a fancy to one of them, pens her a little note, which she kisses rapturously. Yet when he sees the plaintiff, a still brighter vision of loveliness, he orders that the note shall be taken from the bridesmaid and given to her. Judge and jury alike are entranced. Counsel proceeds to open the case, and with bitter reproaches he assails the traitor whose heartless wife victimised his "interesting client," to whom "Camberwell (had) become a bower, Peckham an Arcadian vale." The plaintiff weeps. When she is led to the witness-box she falls in a faint on the foreman's shoulders, but upon the Judge inquiring whether she would not rather recline on him, the fair lady jumps on to the Bench and sits down fondly by the side of the Judge.

Edwin, regarded by all as an object of villainy, now proceeds to state his case, and can only offer to marry the lady to-day and then marry his new love to-morrow. The Judge suggests that this may be a fair proposition, but counsel holds that, on the other hand, "to marry two at once is burglary." Angelina, with a view to increasing the damages, now embraces her inconstant lover and calls upon the jury to witness what a loss she has to deplore. Edwin, in the hope in turn of reducing them, declares that at heart he is a ruffian and a bully, and that she could never endure him a day. The Judge suggests that, as the man declares that when tipsy he would thrash her and kick her, the best plan would be for them to make him tipsy and see! Objection is raised to this on every side, and then the man of law, losing his temper and scattering the books hither and thither, declares that as nothing will please them he will marry the lady himself. This solution seems to carry general agreement. The Judge, having claimed her hand, sings:—

"Though homeward as you trudge  
You declare my law is fudge,  
Yet of beauty I'm a judge."

To which all in court reply, "And a good judge too!"

## "THE SORCERER."

*Produced November 17th, 1887.*

"THE SORCERER" is a merry story of sentimental topsy-turvydom. Cupid could never have performed such mischievous pranks as he did, aided by a magician's love potion, in the pleasant village of Ploverleigh. Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, a baronet of ancient lineage, has invited the tenantry to his Elizabethan mansion to celebrate the betrothal of his son Alexis, a Grenadier Guardsman, to the lovely Aline. So happy and romantic a

union between two old families deserved to be worthily honoured, and a large and lavishly-stocked marquee, we notice, has been erected at one side of the garden. Aline herself is rich, the only daughter of the Lady Sangazure, and the seven thousand and thirty-seventh in direct descent, it seems, from Helen of Troy. Nor are there heart-stirrings only in the homes of the great. Early in the opera it transpires that Constance Partlet, the daughter of a humble pew-opener at the Parish Church, has a doting love for the vicar, Dr. Daly. It is a hopeless passion. Not that the vicar, now a bachelor of venerable years, had never felt the throb of romance in his soul, and never recalled the "aching memory of the old, old days." Fondly does he muse over the time when—

" Maidens of the noblest station,  
Forsaking even military men,  
Would gaze upon me, rapt in admiration—  
Ah, me! I was a pale young curate then."

This, indeed, was the time when love and he were well acquainted, as he tells us in a delightful ballad, and when none was better loved than he in all the land! Yet even these dreams of yester-year fail to awaken in him the desires for a joyous to-morrow. Constance's mother finds him quite unresponsive to her ingenious suggestions, for though he sees the advantage of having a lady installed in the vicarage, he is too old now for his estate to be changed.

Sir Marmaduke and Alexis enter. The honest heart of the father glows at the thought of the marriage, though he confesses that he has little liking for the new kind of love-making, in which couples rush into each other's arms rapturously singing:—

" Oh, my adored one! "      " Beloved boy! "  
" Ecstatic rapture! "      " Unmingled joy! "

So different, he reflects, to the older and more courtly, "Madame, I trust you are in the enjoyment of good health"; "Sir, you are vastly polite, I protest I am mighty well." Even thus did he once pay his addresses to the Lady Sangazure. For once they, too, were lovers! But these reveries are ended by the arrival of Aline, and soon afterwards, to the tuneful salutation of the villagers,

the marriage contract is signed and sealed in the presence of Counsel.

Left alone at last with his betrothed, Alexis tells her of his maxim that true love, the source of every earthly joy, should break down all such artificial barriers as rank, wealth, beauty and age. Upon this subject he has lectured in the workhouses, beershops and asylums, and been received with enthusiasm everywhere, though he cannot deny the aloofness as yet of the aristocracy. He is going to take a desperate step to put those noble principles to proof. From London he has summoned the great John Wellington Wells. He belongs to an old-established firm of family sorcerers, who practise all sorts of magics and spells, with their wonderful penny curse as their quick-selling speciality. From the moment he enters it is obvious that this glib-tongued charlatan is a hustling dynamo. Alexis, much to Aline's alarm, commissions him to supply liberal quantities of his patent love philtre in order that, from purely philanthropical motives, as he explains, he may distribute it secretly amongst the villagers. Wells, like the pushful tradesman he is, has the very thing in his pocket. He guarantees that whoever drinks it will fall in love, as a matter of course, with the first lady he meets who has also tasted it, and his affection will be returned immediately. Then follows a melodramatic incantation as the sorcerer deposits the philtre into a gigantic teapot. "Spirits of earth and air, fiends of flame and fire" are summoned "in shoals" to "this dreadful deed inspire." This done, Mr. Wells beckons the villagers, and all the party, except the two lovers, join merrily in drinking a toast drawn from the teapot. Quickly it becomes evident from their strange conduct that the charm is working. All rub their eyes, and the curtain falls on the picture of many amorous couples, rich and poor alike, under the spell of the romantic illusion.

The same scene greets us when the second act opens. The couples are strangely assorted—an old man with a girl, an elderly woman with a youth—but all sing and dance to a love that is "the source of all joy to humanity." Constance confesses her rapture for a deaf old Notary. Sir Marmaduke himself walks arm-in-arm

with Mrs. Partlet. Dr. Daly is sadly perplexed. The villagers, who had not been addicted to marrying and giving in marriage, have now been coming to him in a body and imploring him to join them in matrimony with little delay. The sentimental old bachelor reflects, moreover, how comely all the maidens are, and sighs that alas! all now are engaged! Meanwhile, Alexis has tried to persuade Aline that they should drink the philtre too, for only thus can they ensure their own undying devotion. She refuses and there is a tiff, but later, to prove that her love for him is true, she does drink the potion, only to be seized by a passionate affection for—Dr. Daly. Nor can the good vicar resist the yearning to reciprocate. Coming to the scene, Alexis is outraged with his lover's perfidy, and at last has very serious doubts about the excellence of his theories and the wisdom of the sorcerer's spell. Dr. Daly, determined to be no man's rival, is ready to quit the country at once and bury his sorrow "in the congenial gloom of a colonial bishopric."

But one of the drollest effects of the enchantment has still to be told. The first man on whom the Lady Sangazure casts her eye after she has succumbed is none other than the notorious John Wellington Wells. In vain does he lie to her that he is already engaged. In vain does he describe a beauteous maiden with bright brown hair who waits for him in the Southern Pacific. She threatens at last to end her sorrows in the family vault, and only then does the sorcerer, as a small reparation for all the emotional disturbance he has created, decide that the acceptance of her hand might not be at all a bad bargain.

In the end the magic scheme becomes so involved that it must be at all costs disentangled. It can be done in only one way. Someone must yield his life to Ahrimanes. Wells agrees to commit this act of self-immolation, and amidst a wreath of fire and brimstone he disappears, melodramatic to the last, through a trap-door in the stage. With his departure the couples re-assort themselves, selecting mates in keeping with their various social stations and ages, and the betrothal festivities resume their merry sway.

## "H.M.S. PINAFORE."

*Produced May 25th, 1878.*

CERTAINLY "H.M.S. Pinafore" was not a model ship as regards the sense of discipline that exists in the real British Navy. But in every other respect it *was* a model ship. Captain Corcoran was the commander of its jovial crew, and a very fine commander he was, always indulgent to his men and always ready to address them politely. Swearing on board was a thing almost unknown. Corcoran did say "bother it" now and again, but he tells us that he never used "a big, big d——"—at least, "hardly ever." Lustily do the crew "give three cheers and one cheer more for the well-bred captain of the Pinafore."

The opera has the quarter-deck for its setting, and it is related that Gilbert took as his model for this scene the old *Victory*, which he went to see at Portsmouth. Our first introduction is to the crew, who busily polish the brasswork and splice the rope while they sing in tuneful nautical strains that their "saucy ship's a beauty" and manned by "sober men and true, attentive to their duty." Only one gruff old salt is there amongst them, and we discover him in the ugly, distorted form of Dick Deadeye. He is thoroughly unpopular. Soon the sailors welcome on board Little Buttercup, a Portsmouth bumboat woman who has come to sell her wares, and who is hailed as "the rosier, the roundest and the reddest beauty in all Spithead." She has certainly some delightful ditties to sing.

One member of the crew is handsome Ralph Rackstraw, who confesses to a passion for Corcoran's pretty daughter Josephine. The poor fellow is downcast that his ambitions should have soared to such impossible heights. Yet Josephine herself is also sad because of a heart that "hopes but vainly." Corcoran chides her, and tells her how happy she should be when her hand is to be claimed, that very day, by the great Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., the First Lord of the Admiralty. She confesses

that, although she is a proud captain's daughter, she loves a humble sailor on board her father's own ship.

Sir Joseph's stately barge is approaching. He comes attended by a host of his sisters and his cousins and his aunts, a very large and charming family group, whom the sailors, instead of standing rigidly at attention, salute with effusive politeness. Sir Joseph, attired in the Court dress of his office, proceeds at once to describe his meteoric rise from an office boy in an attorney's firm to become the "ruler of the Queen's Navee." The story is that of an industrious clerk who, having "served the writs with a smile so bland and copied all the letters in a big round hand," is taken at last into partnership, and eventually becomes an obedient party man in Parliament and a member of the Ministry. For landsmen, the moral of it all is summed up in this golden rule:—

"Stick close to your desk and never go to sea  
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee."

The First Lord has ideas of his own that the sense of independence in the lower deck must be fully encouraged. The British sailor he holds to be any man's equal, and he insists that Captain Corcoran shall accompany every order to his crew, over whom he has been placed merely by accident of birth, with a courteous "If you please." Then he takes Corcoran into the cabin to teach him another accomplishment—dancing the hornpipe. Josephine meanwhile steals out on to the deck. She meets Ralph Rackstraw, who boldly gambles his all on an immediate protestation of love, only to be refused for his presumption and impetuosity. The poor fellow, before the whole ship's company and without their lifting a hand to restrain him, prepares to blow out his brains, when the girl rushes into his arms. Notwithstanding the evil Dick Deadeye's warning, they arrange to steal ashore at night to be married, and the curtain falls on the crew giving three cheers for the sailor's bride.

When the second act opens, the deck is bathed in moonlight. Captain Corcoran is strumming his mandoline and singing a plaintive song—he laments that everything is at sixes and sevens—while gazing at him

sentimentally is Little Buttercup. Following a duet between them, Sir Joseph Porter enters, to complain that he is disappointed in Josephine, and Corcoran can attribute her reticence only to the exalted rank of so distinguished a suitor as the First Lord of the Admiralty. Corcoran afterwards takes his daughter aside and explains to her that love is a platform on which all ranks meet, little mindful how eloquently he is thus pleading the cause of humble Ralph. When the girl has left, Dick Deadeye comes to warn the father of the plan for a midnight elopement. Enveloping himself in a cloak, with a cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand, he awaits developments. Soon the crew steal in on tiptoe, and afterwards the two lovers, ready to escape ashore in the dinghy. Captain Corcoran surprises them, but, to his amazement, Ralph Rackstraw openly and defiantly avows his love, while the crew chant his praises as an Englishman:—

“ For he might have been a Roosian,  
A French, or Turk, or Proosian,  
Or perhaps Italian.  
But in spite of all temptations  
To belong to other nations  
He remains an Englishman ! ”

Even for the well-bred skipper this is too much. He explodes with a “ big, big d——.” Sir Joseph hears the bad language and is horrified. He will hear of no explanations. Captain Corcoran is banished to his cabin in disgrace.

The First Lord is destined to receive still another shock. He hears of the attachment between Josephine and Ralph. The “ presumptuous mariner ” is ordered to be handcuffed and marched off to the dungeon. But it is after this that we hear the biggest surprise of all—and from the lips of Little Buttercup. She recalls that in the years long ago she practised baby farming, and to her care were committed two infants, “ one of low condition, the other a patrician.” Unhappily, in a luckless moment she mixed those children up, and the poor baby really was Corcoran and the rich one Ralph Rackstraw. Ralph thereupon enters in a captain’s uniform. Corcoran follows him in the dress of a mere able-seaman. Sir Joseph decides that, although love levels rank in many



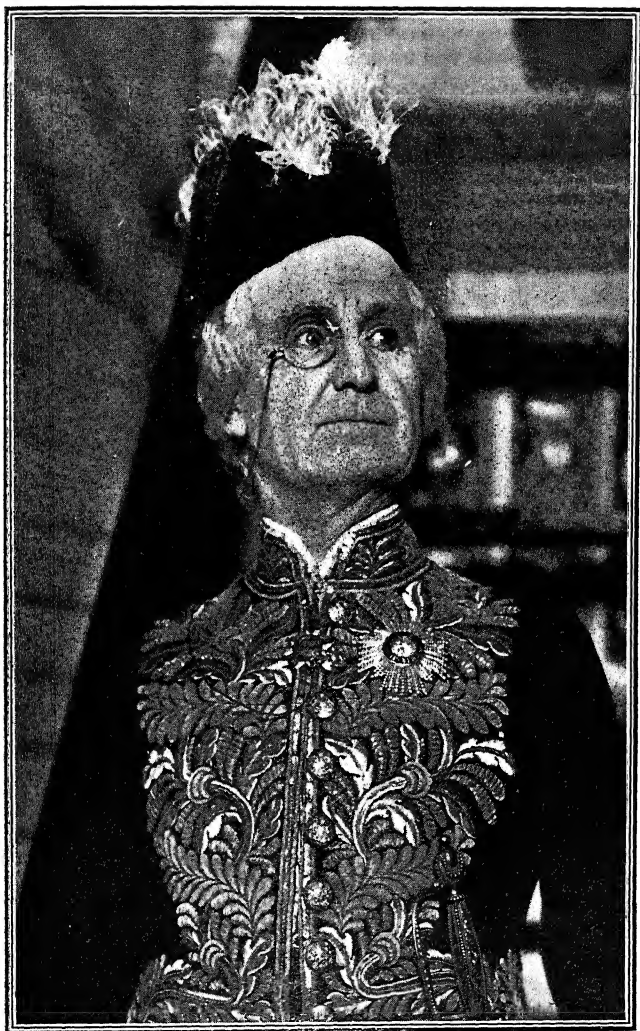
cases, his own marriage with a common sailor's daughter is out of the question, and he resigns himself then and there to his venerable cousin, Hebe. Ralph claims his Josephine, while the fallen Corcoran links his future with that of the bumboat woman, Little Buttercup.

### "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE."

*Produced April 30th, 1880.*

SHELTERED in the Cornish coast was the hiding place of a band of tender-hearted pirates. Never was the trade of the skull-and-cross-bones followed by men of such sensitive and compassionate feelings. They made it a point of honour never to attack a weaker party, and whenever they attempted to fight a stronger one they invariably got thrashed. Orphans themselves, they shrank from ever laying a molesting hand on an orphan, and many of the ships they captured had to be released because they were found to be manned entirely by orphans. Little wonder was it that these Pirates of Penzance could not make the grim trade of piracy pay.

The curtain rises on a scene of revelry. Frederic has just completed his pirate apprenticeship and is being hailed as a fully-fledged member of the gang. That he had been indentured with them at all was a mistake. When he was a lad his nurse was told to take and apprentice him to a pilot, and when she discovered her stupid blunder she let him stay with the pirates, and remained with them herself as a maid-of-all-work, rather than return to brave the parental fury. Frederic, at all times the slave of duty, has loyally served out his time, but now he announces that not only will he not continue at a trade he detests, but he is going to devote himself heart and soul to his old comrades' extermination. The declaration turns the camp from joy into mourning, but these very scrupulous pirates have to admit that a man must act as his conscience dictates,



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
Sir Joseph Porter in "H.M.S. Pinafore."



and they can only crave that the manner of their deaths may be painless and speedy.

Frederic has never seen a woman's face—no other woman's face, at least, but Ruth's, his old nurse, who adores him—and thus there come as a vision of loveliness to him the figures of the many daughters of Major-General Stanley. They have penetrated into the rocky cove during a picnic. Frederic, sensitive about his detested dress, hides from them for a while, but soon he reveals himself and entreats them all to stoop in pity so low as to accept the hand and heart of a pirate. Only one of them, Mabel, is ready to take him for what he is, and the love-making between the two is swift and passionate. It is interrupted by the return of the gang, each member of which seizes a girl and claims her as his bride, and during this lively interlude there arrives old General Stanley. He has lagged behind the rest of the party.

The General, a resplendent figure in his uniform, knows a good deal about the most abstruse and complicated sciences, though he proclaims that he knows no more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery. In this he holds himself to be "the very model of a modern major-general." Completing the candid recital of his attainments and want of them, he inquires what strange deeds are afoot, and he has no liking either for pirates as sons-in-law or for the prospect of being robbed wholesale of his daughters. But where is the way of escape? Luckily the General has heard of these Penzance pirates before, and he wrings their sympathy with the sad news that he, too, is "an orphan boy." For such tender-hearted robbers that is enough. They surrender the girls, and with them all thoughts of matrimonial felicity, and restore the entire party to liberty.

The second act is laid in a ruined chapel at night. General Stanley, surrounded by his daughters, has come to do penance for his lie before the tombs of his ancestors, who are his solely by purchase, for he has owned the estate only a year. Frederic is now to lead an expedition against the pirates. For this perilous mission he has gathered together a squad of police, who march in under their sergeant, all of them very nervous and

under misgivings that possibly they may be going to "die in combat gory." Soon after they have left there is a whimsical development. Frederic, alone in the chapel, is visited by the Pirate King and Ruth. Covering him first of all with their pistols, they tell him that they have remembered that he was born on the 29th of February, and that as he thus has a birthday only every four years he is still but five years of age !

Frederic, as we have observed before, has a keen sense of duty. In blank despair he agrees to return to the gang to finish his apprenticeship. Once more a member of the band, he is bound also to disclose the horrible fact that the old soldier has practised on the pirates credulous simplicity, and that in truth he is no orphan boy. The Pirate King decrees that there shall be a swift and terrible revenge that very night.

When all have left but Mabel, who declares that she will remain faithful to her lover until he has lived his twenty-one leap-years, there re-enter the police. The sergeant laments that the policeman's lot is not a happy one. It is distressing to them to have to be the agents whereby their erring fellow-creatures are deprived of the liberty that everyone prizes.

" When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling,  
 When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,  
 He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling  
 And listen to the merry village chime.  
 When the coster's finished jumping on his mother,  
 He loves to lie a-basking in the sun.  
 Ah ! Take one consideration with another  
 The policeman's lot is not a happy one."

Sounds are heard that indicate the pirates' approach. The police conceal themselves, and soon the intruders enter, armed with all kinds of burglarious tools, and with a cat-like tread (they say so, at least, though they are singing their loudest). They are interrupted, not by the police, but by the appearance of General Stanley. He has had a sleepless night, the effect of a tortured conscience, and he comes in in a dressing-gown and carrying a light. Soon his daughters also appear in their night-caps. The General is seized and ordered to prepare for death. Frederic, even on Mabel's entreaties, cannot save him, for is he not himself a pirate again ?

Eventually, the police, having passively watched the situation so long, summon up courage and tackle the pirates, but they are soon overcome. The sergeant, who with the rest of his men is held prostrate under drawn swords, then calls upon the ruffians to surrender in the name of the Queen. The command acts like magic. Loyally the pirates kneel to their captives, for it transpires from Ruth's lips that they are really "no members of the common throng; they are all noblemen who have gone wrong." All ends happily. The Pirates of Penzance promise to return forthwith to their legislative duties in the House of Lords and, in doing so, they are to share their coronets with the beautiful daughters of old General Stanley.

### "PATIENCE."

*Produced April 23rd, 1881.*

THERE is satire in the very name of this opera. The craze for æstheticism against which it was directed must have placed a strain on the patience of so brilliant an exponent of British commonsense as Sir William Gilbert.

Shorly before the play opens, twenty of the maidens of the village adjoining Castle Bunthorne had fallen in love with the officers of the 35th Heavy Dragoons. But when Reginald Bunthorne, a fleshly poet and a devotee of the æsthetic cult, arrived at the castle, they had fallen out of love with their Dragoons and united with Lady Jane (of uncertain age) in worshipping him. When the curtain rises the "twenty love-sick maidens" are lamenting that Bunthorne is "ice-insensible." Lady Jane tells them that he loves Patience, the village milkmaid, who is seen regarding them with pity. Lady Angela tells Patience that if she has never loved she can never have known true happiness. Patience replies that "the truly happy always seem to have so much on their minds," and "never seem quite well." Lady Jane explains that it is "*Not* indigestion, but æsthetic transfiguration." Patience informs the ladies that the

35th Dragoon Guards have arrived. Lady Ella declares, "We care nothing for Dragoon Guards." "But," exclaims Patience, "You were all engaged to them." "Our minds have been etherealised, our perceptions exalted," answers Lady Angela, who calls on the others to lift up their voices in morning carol to "Our Reginald."

The 35th Dragoons arrive and the Colonel gives us in song:—

"A receipt for that popular mystery  
Known to the world as a Heavy Dragoon."

One of them who arrives later looks miserable, but declares "I'm as cheerful as a poor devil can be, who has the misfortune to be a Duke with a thousand a day." His wretchedness is not relieved by the entrance of Bunthorne, followed by the maidens, who ignore the Dragoons. The Poet pretends to be absorbed in the composition of a poem, but he slyly observes, "I hear plainly all they say, twenty love-sick maidens they." Lady Jane explains to the soldiers that Bunthorne has idealised them. Bunthorne meanwhile is to be seen writhing in the throes of composition. "Finished!" he exclaims and faints in the arms of the Colonel. When he recovers, the love-sick maidens entreat him to read the poem. "Shall I?" he asks. Fiercely the Dragoons shout "No!" but bidding the ladies to "Cling passionately to one another," he recites "Oh, Hollow! Hollow! Hollow!" When the Colonel reminds the ladies that they are engaged to the Dragoons, Lady Saphir says, "It can never be. You are not Empyrean," while Lady Jane sneers at the crudity of their red and yellow uniforms. The Dragoons resent this "insult" to a uniform which has been "as successful in the courts of Venus as in the field of Mars," and lament that "the peripatetics of long-haired æsthetics" should have captured the ladies' fancy. Angrily they return to their camp.

Bunthorne, left "alone and unobserved," confesses to being an "æsthetic sham." "In short," he said, "my mediævalism's affection, born of a morbid love of admiration." Then Patience enters, and he makes love to her. She repulses him, and tragically he bids her

farewell. Lady Angela implores her to "Try, try, try to love." She dilates upon the "Ennobling and unselfish passion" until Patience declares, "I won't go to bed until I'm head over ears in love with somebody." Patience soliloquises, "I had no idea love was a duty. No wonder they all look so unhappy. I'll go at once and fall in love with——" but stops, startled by a figure almost as grotesque as Bunthorne, and exclaims, "A stranger!" The stranger is Archibald Grosvenor, an idyllic poet, who plunges boldly into a declaration of love with his "Prithee pretty maiden, will you marry me?" Patience replies, "I do not know you and therefore must decline." He reveals that he was her sweetheart in childhood's days. Grosvenor begs Patience imagine "The horror of his situation, gifted with unrivalled beauty, and madly loved at first sight by every woman he meets." When Patience enquires why he does not disfigure himself to escape such persecution, he replies, "These gifts were given to me for the enjoyment and delectation of my fellow creatures. I am a trustee for beauty." Grosvenor and Patience plight their troth, but as she remembers that love must be unselfish, and that Grosvenor is so beautiful that there can be no unselfishness in loving him, they bid each other "Farewell." Just as they are parting it occurs to Patience that it cannot be selfish for Grosvenor to love her, and he promises, "I'll go on adoring."

Bunthorne, crowned and garlanded with roses, returns, accompanied by his solicitor and the ladies. The Dragoons arrive also, and ask Bunthorne why he should be so arrayed. He explains that, heart-broken by Patience's rejection, and on the advice of his solicitor, he has put himself up to be raffled for by his admirers. The Dragoons make a fruitless appeal to the ladies in a song by the Duke. The drawing is about to take place when Patience enters, craves Bunthorne's pardon, and offers to be his bride. When Bunthorne rejoices that this is due to the fact that she loves him fondly, Patience tells him that it is because "A maiden who devotes herself to loving you, is prompted by no selfish view."

This scene leads to a temporary reconciliation between



the Dragoons and the ladies, who embrace each other and declare that "Never, oh never, this heart will range from that old, old love again." Then Grosvenor enters. He walks slowly, engrossed in reading. The ladies are strangely fascinated by him and gradually withdraw from the arms of their martial admirers. Lady Angela asks:—

"But who is this, whose god-like grace  
Proclaims he comes of noble race."

Grosvenor replies: "I'm a broken-hearted troubadour. . . . I am æsthetic and poetic." With one voice the ladies cry "Then we love you," and, leaving their Dragoons, they kneel round Grosvenor, arousing the fury of Bunthorne and the horror not only of the Dragoons, but of Grosvenor himself, who declares that "Again my cursed comeliness spreads hopeless anguish and distress."

The curtain falls on this scene, and when it rises again Lady Jane is discovered soliloquising upon the fickle crew who have deserted Bunthorne and sworn allegiance to Grosvenor. She alone is faithful to Bunthorne. Grosvenor enters, followed by the twenty love-sick maidens, pleading for "A gentle smile." He reads them two decalets, and, wearying of their worship, he tells them that his heart is fixed elsewhere, and bids them remember the fable of the magnet and the churn.

Bunthorne and Lady Jane return. The poet is indignant that Grosvenor has cut him out. Lady Jane assures him that she is still faithful, but promises to help him to vanquish his rival, and to achieve this purpose they concert a plan.

Then the Duke, the Colonel and the Major appear. They have discarded their uniforms and adopted an æsthetic dress and make-up, and they practise the attitudes which they imagine will appeal to the ladies. When two of these appear, it is evident that the plan is succeeding, for Lady Angela exclaims, "See! The immortal fire has descended upon them." The officers explain they are doing this at some personal inconvenience to show their devotion, and hope that it is not without effect. They are assured that their conversion to the æsthetic art in its highest development has touched the ladies deeply.

In due course the officers and ladies disappear and give place to Grosvenor. Looking at his reflection in a hand mirror, he declares, "Ah! I am a veritable Narcissus." Bunthorne now wanders on, talking to himself, and declaring that he cannot live without admiration. He accuses Grosvenor of monopolising the attentions of the young ladies. Grosvenor assures him that they are the plague of his life, and asks how he can escape from his predicament. Bunthorne orders him completely to change his appearance, so as to appear absolutely commonplace. At first Grosvenor declines, but when Bunthorne threatens to curse him, he yields cheerfully, and Bunthorne rejoices in the prospect that:—

"When I go out of door  
Of damozels a score,  
All sighing and burning,  
And clinging and yearning  
Will follow me as before."

Patience enters to find him dancing, and he tells her that in future he will be a changed man, having modelled himself upon Grosvenor. She expresses joy, but then recoils from him as she remembers that, as he is now to be utterly free from defect of any kind, her love for him cannot be absolutely unselfish.

Just as Bunthorne is offering to relapse, Grosvenor enters, followed by the ladies and the Dragoons. Grosvenor has assumed an absolutely commonplace appearance. They all dance cheerfully round the stage, and when Bunthorne asks the ladies, "What it all means," they tell him that as Grosvenor or "Archibald the All-right cannot be all wrong," and as he has discarded æstheticism, "it proves that æstheticism ought to be discarded." Patience now discovers that she is free to love Grosvenor. Bunthorne is disappointed, but Lady Jane, who is still æsthetic, tells him to cheer up, as she will never forsake him. They have scarcely time to embrace before the Colonel announces that the Duke has determined to choose a bride. He selects Lady Jane, greatly to the disgust of Bunthorne, who, finding himself the odd man out, declares, "I shall have to be contented with a tulip or lily."

## " IOLANTHE "

*Produced November 25th, 1882.*

IOLANTHE was a Fairy—the life and soul of Fairyland. She wrote all the fairy songs and arranged the fairy dances. For twenty-five years Iolanthe has been in banishment. She had transgressed the fairy law by marrying a mortal, and it was only the Queen's love which saved her from death.

When the curtain rises we witness a gathering of fairies, hear them sing one of Iolanthe's songs, and see them trip her measures. They lament her absence and plead for her pardon. Compassion, allied to curiosity, impels the Queen to recall Iolanthe. For Iolanthe had chosen to dwell at the bottom of a stream, on whose banks we see the fairies disporting themselves. Rising from the pool, clad in water-weeds, Iolanthe receives the Royal pardon. Compassion having been exercised, curiosity demands satisfaction. The Queen enquires why Iolanthe should have chosen to live at the bottom of a stream. Iolanthe then reveals her secret. She has a son who was born shortly after her banishment, and she wished to be near him. The Queen and the other fairies are deeply interested, and just as the Queen is expressing her desire to see the "half-fairy, half-mortal" Arcadian shepherd, Strephon, he dances up to Iolanthe, and with song and pipe urges her to rejoice because "I'm to be married to-day." Iolanthe tells Strephon that she has been pardoned, and presents Strephon to the Queen and to her fairy sisters. "My aunts!" exclaimed Strephon with obvious delight.

Strephon explains the peculiar difficulties consequent on being only half a fairy, and the Queen promises that henceforward the fairies will always be ready to come to his aid should he be in "doubt or danger, peril or perplexitee." Strephon is now joined by Phyllis—a beautiful ward of Chancery and his bride-elect. In the prelude to one of the most delightful love-songs ever written, Phyllis reveals her fear of the consequences which may fall upon Strephon for marrying her without



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
Bunthorne in "Patience."



the consent of the Lord Chancellor, and Strephon demonstrates that his fairy ancestry has not freed him from the pangs of jealousy.

We now witness the entrance and march of the peers in their gorgeous robes, to the strains of magnificent music, ending with a chorus which is assumed to embody the traditional attitude of the peers to the people:—

Bow, bow ye lower middle classes,  
Bow, bow ye tradesmen, bow ye masses."

The Lord Chancellor enters at the conclusion of this chorus, and after a song upon his responsibilities as "The constitutional guardian I, of pretty young wards in Chancery," he announces that the business before the House concerns the disposal of the hand of Phyllis, a Ward of Court. All the peers have fallen in love with her and wish the Lord Chancellor to bestow her upon the one whom she may select. The Lord Chancellor confesses to being "singularly attracted by this young person" and laments that his judicial position prevents him from awarding her to himself. Phyllis arrives, and after being proposed to by Lord Tolloller and Lord Mountarat, the whole of the peers invite her acceptance of their coronets and hearts. Phyllis tells them that already "her heart is given." The Lord Chancellor indignantly demands the name of her lover. Before Phyllis can reply, Strephon opportunely enters the "House" and claims "his darling's hand." The peers depart, dignified and stately, with haughty and disdainful glances upon the lovers.

The glee with which Strephon and Phyllis have regarded their departure is suddenly ended by the wrathful "Now, sir!" of the Lord Chancellor, who separates the lovers and bids Phyllis depart. His severe and sarcastic admonitions leave Strephon lamenting. Iolanthe returns to find her son in tears. As she tenderly consoles him, Phyllis stealthily re-enters, escorted by the peers. Knowing nothing of her lover's fairy origin, and seeing him embracing one who appears equally young and beautiful as herself, she breaks from the hands of the peers just as Iolanthe and Strephon are parting, and accuses the latter of shameless deceit. Strephon's

explanation that "this lady's my mother" is disbelieved by Phyllis and greeted with derision by the peers, who decline to admit that "a maid of seventeen" can be the mother of "a man of four or five-and-twenty."

Believing herself to have been deceived by Strephon Phyllis now ruefully offers to accept either Tolloller or Mountararat, but doesn't care which. Just as she has placed the noble lords in this quandary, Strephon reappears, and invokes the aid of the Fairy Queen. Instantaneously the fairy band are seen "tripping hither, tripping thither" among the amazed peers, while the slender Lord Chancellor encounters a rude shock when he collides with the massive form of the Queen. Strephon tells his tale of woe, and there follows an amazing and amusing exchange of reproach and ridicule. The infuriated Queen determines to punish the peers. Strephon shall go into Parliament to wreak vengeance on them. The recital of the measures which he is to carry through Parliament alarms the peers, and the first Act ends, after a pretence at defiance, in their vainly suing for mercy.

The second Act of "*Iolanthe*" is staged in the Palace Yard at Westminster. A solitary sentry is discovered moralising upon the proceedings in "that House." He has observed that if the members have—

"A brain and cerebellum, too,  
They've got to leave that brain outside  
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to."

Presently the fairies reappear and rejoice over Strephon's success as a Member of Parliament. Then the peers enter and reveal their annoyance with Strephon, whom they describe as "a Parliamentary Pickford—he carries everything." A heated argument ensues between the fairies and the peers. It is ended by a song from Mountararat in praise of the House of Peers, which sparkles with satire on the members of that ancient institution, who make "no pretence to intellectual eminence or scholarship sublime."

Having pleaded in vain that the fairies should prevent Strephon from doing further mischief, they depart in anger, and the Queen enters to find her band gazing wistfully after them. Scenting danger, the Queen calls

upon them to subdue this "weakness." Celia retorts that "the weakness is so strong." The Queen replies by protesting that, although she herself is not "insensible to the effect of manly beauty" in the person of the stalwart Guardsman still on sentry-go, she is able to subdue her feelings, though, in the famous "Captain Shaw" song, which follows, she asks:—

" Could thy Brigade  
With cold cascade,  
Quench my great love, I wonder ? "

Phyllis now re-appears, seeming very unhappy, and is presently joined by Tolloller and Mountararat, who wrangle as to which shall yield her to the other. Phyllis implores them not to fight for her. "It is not worth while," she declares, and after a moment's reflection they agree that "the sacred ties of friendship are paramount." Following the departure of the trio there enters the Lord Chancellor looking dejected and very miserable. He, too, it will be remembered, had fallen in love with Phyllis, and he now mourns aloud that "love unrequited robs him of his rest." Mountararat and Tolloller join him and express their concern at his woe-begone appearance. He explains, and they persuade him to make another application to himself for permission to marry Phyllis. Then Phyllis and Strephon encounter each other in the Palace Square. Taunted by a reference to his "young" mother, Strephon discloses that she is a fairy. This leads to a reconciliation. Iolanthe joins them, and when they ask her to appeal to the Lord Chancellor for his consent to their marriage, she reveals the secret of her life. The Lord Chancellor is her husband! He thinks her dead, and she is bound under penalty of death not to undeceive him. The Lord Chancellor enters, exclaiming, "Victory! victory!" In the highest spirits he relates how he had wrested from himself permission to marry Phyllis. Then Iolanthe, still hiding her identity, pleads Strephon's cause. When he refuses her plea, she determines to gain happiness for her son even at the cost of her own life. Despite the warning song of her fairy sisters, Iolanthe shocks the Chancellor with the words, "It may not be—I am thy wife."



The Fairy Queen breaks in upon this tragic episode with the threat of Iolanthe's doom, but ere it can be pronounced the Fairy Leila tells the Queen that if Iolanthe must die so must they all, for all have married peers. Bewildered by this dilemma the Fairy Queen is greatly relieved when the Lord Chancellor suggests that instead of the fairy law reading, "Every fairy must die who marries a mortal," it should be "Every fairy must die who don't marry a mortal." Accepting the suggestion, the Queen finds her own life in peril. She proposes to the stalwart Grenadier still on duty, who gallantly accepts. The peers also agree to exchange the "House of Peers for House of Peris." Wings spring from their shoulders and away they all fly, "Up in the sky, ever so high," where "pleasures come in endless series."

### "PRINCESS IDA."

*Produced January 5th, 1884.*

PRINCESS IDA was the daughter of King Gama, and when but twelve-months' old, she had been betrothed to Prince Hilarion, the two-year-old son of King Hildebrand. The opening scene presents King Hildebrand and his courtiers awaiting the arrival of King Gama and Princess Ida for the celebration of the nuptials in accordance with the marriage contract. Some doubt exists as to whether this will be honoured, for Prince Hilarion has heard that his bride has "forsworn the world." It is presently announced that Gama and his train are approaching. His appearance is preceded by that of three bearded warriors clad in armour, who declare that they are "Sons of Gama Rex," and naively add, "Like most sons are we, masculine in sex." They are followed by Gama, who fits in appearance Hildebrand's description of him as "a twisted monster

—all awry.” In a three-verse song Gama describes his own character in detail, each verse ending:—

“ Yet everybody thinks I’m such a disagreeable man  
And I can’t think why.”

Gama proceeds to justify the universal opinion by his venomous remarks to Hildebrand’s courtiers, and when Hildebrand demands the reason for Ida’s absence, he becomes insulting. Later, he relates that Ida has established and rules a Woman’s University in Castle Adamant, from which all males are excluded. Gama tells Hilarion that if he addresses the lady most politely she may deign to look on him. Hildebrand bids Hilarion go to Castle Adamant and claim Ida as his wife, but adds that if she refuses, his soldiers will “storm the lady.” King Gama is detained as hostage, with the warning that “Should Hilarion disappear, we will hang you, never fear, most politely, most politely.” Gama and his three sons are then marched off to their prison cell.

In the second act, we are transported to Castle Adamant, and behold, in the gardens, Lady Psyche surrounded by girl graduates. Lady Blanche arrives, and reads to them the Princess Ida’s list of punishments. One student is expelled for bringing in a set of chessmen, while another is punished for having sketched a perambulator. Then Princess Ida herself enters, and is hailed by the students as a “mighty maiden with a mission.” Her address to the students is intended to demonstrate woman’s superiority over man. Then Lady Blanche, in announcing a lecture by herself on abstract philosophy, reveals that the exclusion of the male sex from the university has not banished jealousy. Ida and the students enter the castle. Hardly have they gone, when Hilarion, accompanied by Cyril and Florian, are seen climbing the garden wall. They don some collegiate robes which they discover, and are appropriately jocular regarding their transformation into “three lovely undergraduates.” Surprised by the entry of Princess Ida, they determine to present themselves as would-be students, and she promises them that “If all you say is true, you’ll spend with us a happy,

happy time." The Princess leaves them alone, but as she goes Lady Psyche enters unobserved. She overhears their conversation, and is amazed by it, but not more so than Florian when he finds that Lady Psyche is his sister. The men entrust her with their secret. She warns them that discovery may mean death, and sings them a song which sums up the Princess Ida's teaching to the effect that man "at best is only a monkey shaved." Melissa now enters. She learns that the visitors are men and loyally promises secrecy. Whilst they are heartily enjoying themselves Lady Blanche, who is the mother of Melissa, has observed them, and as all five are leaving the gardens, she calls Melissa and taxes her with the facts. Melissa explains the situation, and persuades her mother to assist Hilarion's plan.

In the next scene the Princess Ida and the students are seen at an alfresco luncheon. Cyril becomes tipsy, discloses the secret of the intruders, and scandalises the Princess by singing an "old kissing song":—

"Would you know the kind of maid  
Sets my heart aflame—a?"

In her excitement at this revelation the Princess falls into the stream which flows through the gardens. Hilarion rescues her, but this gallant feat does not shake the lady's resolution, and she orders their arrest. As they are marched away Melissa brings news of an armed band without the castle. Speedily Hildebrand, at the head of his soldiers, confronts Ida. The three sons of Gama, still clad in armour, warn her that refusal to yield means death. Hildebrand gives Ida until the next day to "decide to pocket your pride and let Hilarion claim his bride." The curtain falls upon the Princess hurling defiance at Hildebrand.

When the curtain rises for the third time, we discover that the outer walls and courtyard of Castle Adamant are held by Princess Ida's students, who are armed with battle-axes, and who sing of "Death to the invader." The Princess comes, attended by Blanche and Psyche, and warns them that "we have to meet stern bearded warriors in fight to-day." She bids them remember that they have to show that they "can meet

Man face to face on his own ground, and beat him there." But as she reviews her forces, she meets with disappointment. The lady surgeon declares that, although she has often cut off legs and arms in theory, she won't cut off "real live legs and arms." The armourer explains that the rifles have been left in the armoury "for fear . . . they might go off." The band-mistress excuses the absence of the band who "can't come out to-day." Contemptuously, Ida bids them depart. Lamenting the failure of her plan, she is surprised by the arrival of her father, who announces that he is to give a message from Hildebrand, and then return to "black captivity." The message is that, being loth to war with women, Hildebrand wishes Ida to consent to the disposal of her hand being settled by combat between her three brothers and three of Hildebrand's knights. Ida demands of her father what possesses him that he should convey such an offer. Gama replies: "He tortures me with torments worse than death," and in pity she yields to the proposal.

While the girls mount the battlements, Hildebrand and his soldiers enter, and there is a fight between Gama's sons and Hilarion, Cyril and Florian. The latter are victorious. Seeing her brothers lying wounded, Ida cries "Hold—we yield ourselves to you," and resigns the headship of the University to Lady Blanche. Sadly Ida admits the failure of her scheme. She had hoped to band all women together to adjure tyrannic man. To Hildebrand she says that if her scheme had been successful "at my exalted name posterity would bow." Hildebrand retorts, "If you enlist all women in your cause—how is this posterity to be provided?" Ida turns to Hilarion, admitting her error to him, and the opera ends with the company declaring:—

"It were profanity for poor humanity  
To treat as vanity the sway of love.  
In no locality or principality  
Is our mortality its sway above."

“ THE MIKADO.”

*Produced March 14th, 1885.*

ALTHOUGH this opera is entitled “The Mikado,” very little is seen of that great potentate, which is quite in accordance with Japanese custom, so vastly different to ours in matters of Royalty. The opera concerns much more closely the adventures of Nanki-Poo, the Mikado’s son and heir, who has fled in disguise from the Court to escape from Katisha, an elderly lady whom the Mikado had ordered him to marry within a week or perish.

Immediately after the opening chorus by the gentlemen of Japan the disguised Crown Prince enters. He is labouring under great excitement, and begs for information as to the dwelling of “a gentle maiden, Yum-Yum.” One of the Japanese nobles asks, “Who are you?” and he replies in a delightful song—

“ A wandering minstrel I,  
A thing of shreds and patches,  
Of ballads, songs and snatches,  
And dreamy lullaby.”

In reply to a further question as to his business with the maiden, Nanki-Poo takes the gentlemen of Japan partly into his confidence. He explains that a year before he had fallen in love with Yum-Yum, who returned his affection. As, however, she was betrothed to her guardian Ko-Ko, a cheap tailor, he had left Titipu in despair. Learning that Ko-Ko has been condemned to death for flirting, he now hoped to find Yum-Yum free. Alas! for Nanki-Poo’s hopes, they inform him that not only has Ko-Ko been reprieved, but that he has been elevated to the highest rank a citizen can attain, and is now Lord High Executioner. Pish Tush explains that, in order to circumvent the Mikado’s decree making flirtation a capital offence, they have appointed Ko-Ko as Lord High Executioner, because, being under sentence of death himself, he cannot cut off anybody else’s head until he has cut off his own.



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
King Gama in "Princess Ida."



Expressing his sense of the condescension shown to him by Pooh-Bah, that portly personage explains that although "a particularly haughty and exclusive person," who can trace his ancestry back to "a protoplasmic, primordial, atomic globule," he mortifies his family pride. In proof of this he points out that, when all the other high officers of State had resigned because they were too proud to serve under an ex-tailor, he had accepted all their posts (and the salaries attached) at once, so that he is now First Lord of the Treasury, Lord Chief Justice, Commander-in-Chief, Lord High Admiral, Master of the Buckhounds, Groom of the Back Stairs, Archbishop, and Lord Mayor.

Pooh-Bah informs Nanki-Poo that Yum-Yum is arriving from school that very day to be married to Ko-Ko. Ko-Ko enters, preceded by a chorus of nobles, and Pooh-Bah refers Nanki-Poo to him for any further information concerning Yum-Yum. This is Ko-Ko's first public appearance as Lord High Executioner, and after thanking the nobles for their welcome, he promises strict attention to his duties. Happily, he remarks, "there will be no difficulty in finding plenty of people whose loss will be a distinct gain to society at large." He proceeds to mention in a song that he's got "a little list" as possible victims and "they'll none of 'em be missed."

So far the opera has been an exclusively masculine affair, but Yum-Yum now arrives, escorted by a bevy of dainty schoolfellows, who sing of their "Wondering what the world can be." This little chorus contains two exquisite verses—

"Is it but a world of trouble,	"Are its palaces and pleasures
Sadness set to song?	Fantasies that fade?
Is its beauty but a bubble,	And the glory of its treasures
Bound to break ere long?"	Shadows of a shade?"

Yum-Yum and her bridesmaids, Peep-bo and Pitti Sing, introduce themselves by the delicious trio, "Three Little Maids." Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah enter, and Yum-Yum reluctantly permits Ko-Ko to kiss her. At this moment, Nanki-Poo arrives and the "three little maids" rush over to him and welcome him with great effusion. Ko-Ko's jealousy is aroused, and he asks to be



presented. Right boyishly Nanki-Poo blurts out to Ko-Ko that he loves Yum-Yum. He expects Ko-Ko to be angry, but instead Ko-Ko thanks him for agreeing with him as to the lady's charms. Presently Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum manage to get the Courtyard to themselves. During their *tête-à-tête* Nanki-Poo reveals his secret to Yum-Yum. They are interrupted by the appearance of Ko-Ko and escape in different directions. As Ko-Ko soliloquises upon his beloved, he is interrupted by Pooh-Bah with a letter from the Mikado. This is an intimation that, as no executions have taken place in Titipu for a year, the office of Lord High Executioner will be abolished and the city reduced to the rank of a village unless somebody is beheaded within one month. As this would involve the city in ruin, Ko-Ko declares that he will have to execute someone. Pooh-Bah, pointing out that Ko-Ko himself is under sentence of death, suggests that he should execute himself. This leads to an acrimonious discussion, which is ended by Ko-Ko appointing Pooh-Bah, who is already holding all the other high offices of State, to be Lord High Substitute (for himself as a victim of the headsman). But Pooh-Bah declares "I must set bounds to my insatiable ambition." He draws the line at his own death.

Whilst Ko-Ko is lamenting the position as "simply appalling" he is disturbed by the entrance of Nanki-Poo with a rope in his hands. He has made up his mind to commit suicide because Ko-Ko is going to marry Yum-Yum. Finding "threats, entreaties, prayers all uelless" Ko-Ko is struck with a brilliant idea. He suggests that Nanki-Poo should at the end of a month's time "be beheaded handsomely at the hands of the Public Executioner." To this Nanki-Poo agrees on condition that Ko-Ko permits him to marry Yum-Yum. Reluctantly Ko-Ko accepts the condition, and when Pooh-Bah returns to enquire what Ko-Ko has decided to do in regard to an execution, he replies, "Congratulate me! I've found a volunteer." Whilst the townsfolk of Titipu are bantering Nanki-Poo on the prospect of marriage and death, their revelry is interrupted by the arrival of the lady who was the cause of Nanki-Poo's wandering. Katisha discovers Nanki-

Poo and calls upon him to "give me my place." When he refuses she would have revealed his identity, but every time she tries to say "He is the son of your Mikado" her voice is drowned by the singing of Nanki-Poo, Yum-Yum and the chorus. Eventually Katisha rushes away threatening furious vengeance.

When the curtain rises again the scene is the garden of Ko-Ko's palace. We see Yum-Yum decked by her bridesmaids for the wedding, while they sing of her loveliness, and Pitti-Sing bids her "Sit with downcast eye; let it brim with dew." Pitti-Sing tells her also that "modesty at marriage tide well becomes a pretty bride," but this admonition seems lost upon a bride who, when her adornment is complete, frankly revels in her beauty. In "The Sun whose rays," a song of entrancing melody, she declares, "I mean to rule the earth as he the sky."

But her rapture is marred by the reminder from Peep-Bo that her bridegroom has only a month to live. Nanki-Poo finds her in tears, and has much difficulty in comforting her, their feelings being aptly expressed in that wonderful madrigal, which although it begins so joyfully with "Brightly dawns our wedding day," yet ends in tears. Ko-Ko now joins the wedding party, and although the sight of Yum-Yum in Nanki-Poo's arms is "simple torture," he insists on remaining, so that he may get used to it. When Yum-Yum says it is only for a month, he tells of his discovery that when a married man is beheaded his wife must be buried alive. Naturally, Yum-Yum demurs to a wedding with such a hideous ending to the honeymoon, and Nanki-Poo declares that, as he cannot live without Yum-Yum, he intends to perform the "happy dispatch." Ko-Ko's protest is followed by the entry of Pooh-Bah to announce the approach of the Mikado and his suite. They will arrive in ten minutes. Ko-Ko, believing that the Mikado is coming to see whether his orders regarding an execution have been obeyed, is in great alarm. Nanki-Poo invites Ko-Ko to behead him at once, and Pooh-Bah agitatedly urges Ko-Ko to "chop it off," but he declares that he can't do it. He has "never even killed a blue-bottle." Ko-Ko decides that the making of an affidavit that Nanki-Poo

has been executed, witnessed by Pooh-Bah in each of his capacities as Lord Chief Justice, etc., etc., will satisfy the Mikado. Pooh-Bah agrees on condition that he shall be "grossly insulted" with "cash down."

Then as Commissionaire Pooh-Bah is ordered to find Yum-Yum. Ko-Ko orders her to go along with the Archbishop (Pooh-Bah), who will marry her to Nanki-Poo at once. Waving aside all questions, Ko-Ko urges them off just as the procession heralding the Mikado and Katisha enters the garden to the strains of "Miya sama, miya sama." The Mikado extols himself as "a true philanthropist" and declares "my object all sublime, I shall achieve in time; to let the punishment fit the crime." His list of social crimes and the penalties prescribed for each class of offender are equally amusing. Ko-Ko, Pooh-Bah and Pitti-Sing now kneel in the presence, and Ko-Ko informs the Mikado that "the execution has taken place" and hands in the coroner's certificate signed by Pooh-Bah. Then the three proceed to describe an event which had happened only in their imaginations.

The Mikado seems bored, and explains that though all this is very interesting, he has come about a totally different matter. He asks for his son, who is masquerading in Titipu under the name of Nanki-Poo. Ko-Ko and his associates are visibly disturbed, but he stammers out that Nanki-Poo has gone abroad. The Mikado demands his address. "Knightsbridge" is the reply. (At the time this opera was originally produced there was a Japanese colony in Knightsbridge.) Just then Katisha, reading the coroner's certificate, discovers that it contains the name of Nanki-Poo and shrieks her dismay. Pooh-Bah, Ko-Ko, and Pitti Sing grovel at the Mikado's feet, and apologise abjectly. The Mikado urges them not to distress themselves, and just as they are feeling that it doesn't really matter, the Mikado turns to Katisha with "I forget the punishment for compassing the death of the heir-apparent." The three culprits learn with horror that it is "something humorous, but lingering, with either boiling oil or molten lead in it." The Mikado appoints "after luncheon" for the punishment which "fits their crime."

When the Mikado has departed Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah decide that Nanki-Poo must "come to life at once." At this moment he and his bride cross the garden—leaving for their honeymoon. Ko-Ko explains that the Mikado wants Nanki-Poo, and Pooh-Bah ironically adds, "So does Katisha." But Nanki-Poo fears that, in her anger at his marriage, Katisha will persuade the Mikado to order his execution, thus involving Yum-Yum in a worse fate. He therefore refuses to re-appear until Ko-Ko has persuaded Katisha to marry him. Then "existence will be as welcome as the flowers in spring." As this seems to be the only way of escape, Ko-Ko seeks Katisha. At first she repulses him, but after he has told her in song the story of the little tom-tit that committed suicide because of blighted affection, she relents.

Now the Mikado returns from luncheon, and asks if "the painful preparations have been made." Being assured that they have, he orders the three culprits to be produced. As they again grovel at his feet, Katisha intercedes for mercy. She tells the Mikado that she has just married "this miserable object," indicating Ko-Ko. The Mikado is remarking "But as you have slain the heir-apparent," when Nanki-Poo enters saying "The heir-apparent is not slain." He is heartily welcomed by the Mikado, while Katisha denounces Ko-Ko as a traitor. Ko-Ko then explains everything to the Mikado's satisfaction, and the opera ends with the joyous strains of Nanki-Poo and Yum-Yum uniting in "the threatened cloud has passed away and fairly shines the dawning day," whilst the entire company help them—

"With joyous shout and ringing cheer,  
Inaugurate our new career."

"RUDDIGORE."

*Produced January 22nd, 1887.*

In the days of long, long ago there lived the wicked Sir Rupert Murgatroyd, baronet of Ruddigore. He spent all his leisure and his wealth in the persecution of

witches, and the more fiendish his cruelties, the more he enjoyed the ruthless sport. But there came a day when he was roasting alive an old witch on the village green. The hag uttered a terrible curse both on the baronet and on all his descendants. Every lord of Ruddigore was doomed to commit one crime a day, and if he attempted to avoid it or became satiated with guilt, that very day he should die in awful agony. The prophecy came true. Each heir to the title inherited the curse and came in the end to a fearful death.

Upon this plot Gilbert wrote his clever burlesque on the transpontine drama—the drama of the virtuous peasant girl in the clutches of the bold and bad baronet—and amongst his characters is a tragic figure not unlike Shakespeare's Ophelia. The first scene is laid in the pretty Cornish fishing village of Rederring. This village, by the way, has a quaint institution in the form of a troop of professional bridesmaids, who are bound to be on duty from ten to four o'clock every day, but whose services have of late been in little request. The girls can only hope that they may soon be able to celebrate the betrothal of Rose Maybud, the belle of Rederring, a precise little maid whose every action is regulated by a book of etiquette, written by no less an authority than the wife of a Lord Mayor. Should an utter stranger be allowed to pay her pretty compliments? "Always speak the truth," answers the book. It tells her that "in accepting an offer of marriage, do so with apparent hesitation," and this same guide and monitor declares that, in similar circumstances, "a little show of emotion will not be misplaced." Rose, indeed, has had very many suitors, but as yet her heart is free.

Early in the opera Dame Hannah, who was herself once wooed by the last baronet in disguise, relates the story of the terrible curse on the house of Murgatroyd. She is Rose's aunt, and she talks to the girl about Robin Oakapple, a young man who "combines the manners of a Marquis with the morals of a Methodist." Now, this same Robin Oakapple, we afterwards learn, is himself the real owner of Ruddigore, but ten years ago he so dreaded the thought of becoming the victim of the witch's malediction that he fled from his ancestral home,

assumed the style and name of a simple farmer, and lived unsuspected in Rederring. In the belief that he was dead his young brother succeeded to the baronetcy and all its obligations to a life of infamy. Only two know the secret—Robin's faithful servant, Old Adam, and his sailor foster-brother, Richard Dauntless.

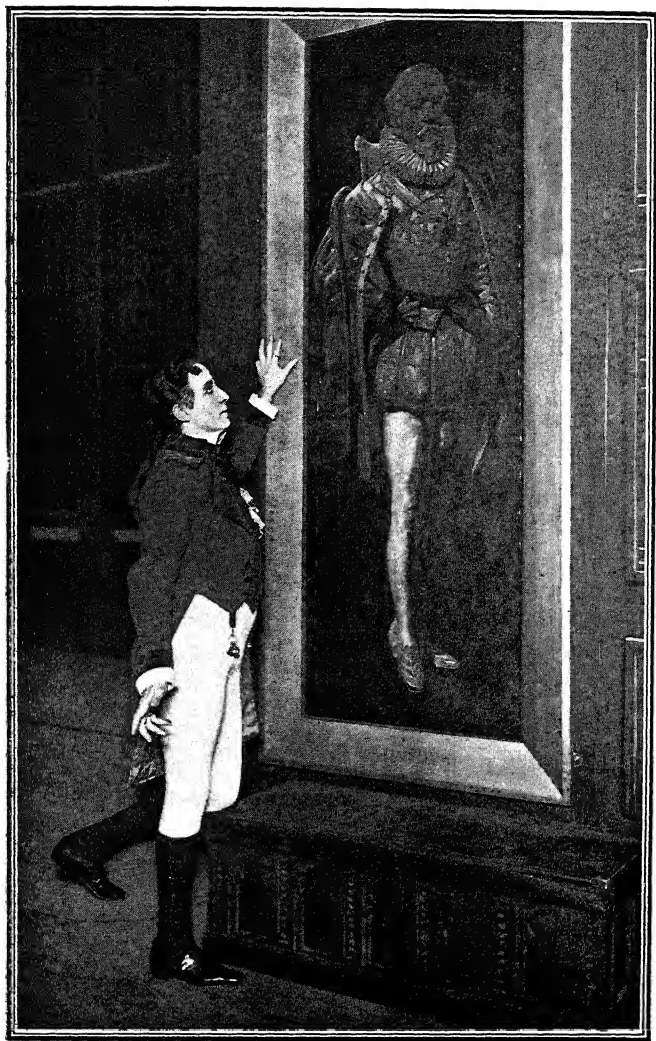
Robin is such a shy fellow that he cannot summon up the pluck to propose to Rose Maybud. She, it seems, would not be unwilling to return his affections if he declared them, and she gives more than a broad hint to her bashful lover in a delightful duet, "Poor Little Man." But Robin has to do his love-making by proxy. Luckily or otherwise, Richard has just returned from the sea, and this hearty British tar sings a rollicking song in the Dibdin manner about how his man-o'-war, the "Tom-Tit," met a little French frigate, and how they had "pity on a poor Parley-voo." When "Ruddigore" was produced, this number gave grave offence to the French people, and there were critics at home who held that it reflected also on the British Navy. The storm, however, never led then and never would lead now to international complications, and what questions of taste there may be in the lyric are soon forgotten in the engaging hornpipe which follows the song.

Richard, who talks in nautical phrases and declares that he always acts strictly as his heart dictates, promises to help Robin in securing the hand of Rose Maybud. He at least is not afflicted with too much diffidence, and Robin himself sings the lines, which have now passed into a proverb, that if in the world you wish to advance "you must stir it and stump it and blow your own trumpet." But Richard, when he sees the girl, acts as his heart dictates and falls in love with her himself, the courtship scene being delightfully quaint. Robin returns to claim his bride, but when he finds that his foster-brother has played him false, he is not loth to praise his good qualities. Yet, in a trio, the fickle Rose, having the choice between a man who owns many acres and a humble sailor, gives herself to Robin Oak-apple.

This incident is followed by the appearance of Mad Margaret, a crazy figure in white who lost her reason

when she was jilted by the reigning baronet, Sir Despard Murgatroyd. The poor, distracted girl is still seeking for her faithless lover, and as she toys with her flowers she sings a plaintive and haunting ballad "To a garden full of posies." Following this strange scene, there arrive the Bucks and Blades—all wearing the regimental uniforms of Wellington's time, the period to which the opera is supposed to belong—and after them the gloomy Sir Despard. The crowd shrink from him in horror, while he, poor man, tells how he has really the heart of a child, but how a whole picture gallery of ancestors threaten him with death if he hesitates to commit his daily crime. Then Richard re-enters. Either because of his anger that Robin has claimed Rose's hand or because, at whatever cost, he must do as his heart dictates, he makes known to the baronet that his missing brother is none other than Robin Oakapple. When, a little later, the nuptial ceremony of the happy couple is about to begin, the festivities are interrupted by Sir Despard dramatically declaring Robin's real identity, and poor Robin has to forfeit Rose, who once more turns to Richard, and face a fateful existence as Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd.

For the second act the scene moves to the haunted Picture Gallery of Ruddigore Castle. Sir Ruthven, otherwise Robin, now wears the haggard aspect of a guilty roué, while the once-benevolent Old Adam acts the part of the wicked "confidential adviser of the greatest villain unhung." They discuss a likely crime for the day. It concerns Richard and Rose, who have arrived to ask for the baronet's consent to their marriage, and he retorts by threatening to commit them to a dungeon. This the sailor thwarts by waving a Union Jack. Then Rose prevails upon the wicked relative to relent. Left alone, the unhappy man addresses the portraits of his ancestors, bidding them to remember the time when they themselves welcomed death at last as a means of freedom from a guilty existence, and urging them to let the thought of that repentance "tune your souls to mercy on your poor posterity." The stage darkens for a moment, and then it is seen that the pictures have become animated and that the figures, representing the



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
Robin Oakapple in "Ruddigore."





long line of the accursed race, and garbed magnificently according to the times in which each of the ancestors lived, have stepped from their frames. Sir Roderic, the last of the baronets to die, sings a spectral song about the ghostly revelries by night.

Now the ancestors remind their degenerate successor that it is their duty to see that he commits his daily crimes in conscientious and workmanlike style. They are not impressed with his record of the crimes he has so far committed. "Everybody does that," they tell him, when he declares that he has falsified his income-tax return, and they are also unmoved when he says that, on other days, he forged his own will and disinherited his unborn son. They demand that he must at least carry off a lady, and when he refuses they torture him until, in agony, he has to accept their command. When the ghosts have returned to their frames Old Adam is accordingly ordered to bring a maiden—any maiden will do—from the village.

Once more we meet Sir Despard and Mad Margaret. They are prim of manner, they wear black of formal cut, and in every way their appearances have changed. They are married and conduct a National School. The ex-baronet has become expert at penny readings. Margaret, now a district visitor, has recovered her sanity, though she has occasional lapses. The quaint duet between them is followed by a meeting with Robin, who hears that his record of infamy includes not only the crimes he has committed during the week, but all those perpetrated by Despard during the ten years he reigned at Ruddigore. He decides, even at the cost of his life, to bid his ancestors defiance. But now Old Adam returns, not with a beautiful maiden, but with old Dame Hannah. She is a tiger cat indeed, and despite the baronet's declaration that he is reforming and that his intentions towards her are honourable, she seizes a formidable dagger from one of the armed figures and declares for a fight to the finish. The episode is interrupted by the re-appearance of the ghostly Sir Roderic. What is more, he and Dame Hannah recognise themselves as old lovers, and a whimsical love-scene leads up to a tender little ballad about the "flower and the oak tree."

The end comes swiftly. Robin, accompanied by all the other characters, rushes in to declare his happy discovery. He argues that a baronet can die only by refusing to commit his daily crime, and thus it follows that a refusal to commit a crime is tantamount to suicide, which is in itself a crime. The curse will thus not stand logical analysis! Sir Roderic concurs, and as the natural deduction is that he himself ought never to have died at all, he and Dame Hannah are able at last to bring joy and laughter within the grim walls of Ruddigore. Robin, having found a week as holder of a title ample enough, determines to earn a modest livelihood in agricultural employment, and this time he both claims and keeps the hand of Rose Maybud. Richard, robbed of his intended bride, soon replaces her from amongst the troop of professional bridesmaids, while Despard and Margaret leave to pass a secluded existence in the town of Basingstoke.

### “THE YEOMEN OF THE GUARD.”

*Produced October 3rd, 1888.*

JACK POINT was a poor strolling player in the days of old Merrie England. With pretty Elsie Maynard he tramped through the towns and villages, and everywhere the two entertained the good folk with their songs and their dances, their quips and their cranks. Jack Point could have been no ordinary jester. Some years before he had been in the service of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he mortally offended his Grace by his conundrum that the only difference between the two of them was that “whereas his Grace was paid £10,000 a year for being good, poor Jack Point was good—for nothing.” “’Twas but a harmless jest,” the Merry-man sadly reflected, but the Archbishop had him whipped and put in the stocks as a rogue, and Jack Point was in no humour to “take a post again with the dignified clergy.”

Then began the vagabondage of the strolling player. Jack and Elsie made but a poor living, though they looked forward to the time when the smiles of fortune, the rewards of honest mirth, would allow them to marry. Certainly Jack Point had a pretty wit, and beneath the motley there beat a true heart of gold, too soon to be broken by tragedy. It was the old, old story of the jester who to the world's eye was a merry and boisterous fellow, though in his inner being he was suffering all the while the tortures of anguish. But list ye now to the story's unfolding!

The curtain rises on a faithful picture of the Tower of London, that picturesque and historic old fortress indissolubly connected with some of the brightest, and the darkest, annals of England. Soon we see the Yeomen of the Guard, clad in their traditional garb and carrying their halberds, and amongst them is old Sergeant Meryll. He has a daughter named Phoebe, whose heart and hand is being sought in vain by the grim and repulsive-looking Wilfred Shadbolt, who links the office of head jailor with the "assistant tormentorship." It is part of this uncouth fellow's duty to twist the thumbscrew and turn the rack to wring confessions from the prisoners. So far from Phoebe being attracted to Shadbolt, her thoughts are turned towards a young and handsome officer, Colonel Fairfax, who lies under sentence of death in the Tower by the evil designs of his kinsman, Sir Charles Polt-whistle, a Secretary of State. Fairfax has been condemned on a charge of sorcery, though his cousin's craft is really to secure the succession to his rich estate, which falls to him if he dies unmarried.

Some hopes linger that the soldier may yet be reprieved. Leonard Meryll, the old sergeant's son, is coming from Windsor that day after the Court has honoured him for his valour in many martial adventures, and it is possible that he may bring with him the order that will save Colonel Fairfax. He does not bring the reprieve. Sergeant Meryll, whose life the condemned man has twice saved, and who would now readily give his own life for him, thereupon schemes a deception. Leonard's future career is to be with the Yeomen of the

Guard, but as his arrival is unknown, it is arranged that he shall hide himself for a while and his place be filled by the imprisoned Fairfax. Just after this the Colonel himself comes into view, under an escort commanded by the Lieutenant, and on his way to the Cold Harbour Tower "to await his end in solitude." He treats death lightly—has he not a dozen times faced it in battle?—but he has one strange last request. Could he, as a means of thwarting his relative, be allowed to marry? The lady would be a bride but for an hour, and her legacy would be his dishonoured name and a hundred crowns and "never was a marriage contracted with so little of evil to the contracting parties." The Lieutenant, who admires the brave fellow, believes that the task of finding him a wife should be easy.

Now we meet Jack Point and Elsie Maynard. Not a little terrified, they are chased in by the crowd, who bid them "banish your timidity and with all rapidity give us quip and quiddity." The choice of the wandering minstrels is their duet, "I have a song to sing, O!" Never was there a more enchanting ditty, and very significantly it tells of a merry-man's love of a maid, and of the humble maid—

" Who loved a lord, and who laughed aloud  
At the moan of the merry-man, moping mum,  
Whose soul was sad, and whose glance was glum,  
Who sipped no sup, and who craved no crumb,  
As he sighed for the love of a ladye!"

Scarcely have the crowd finished applauding this offering than the Lieutenant enters, clears the rabble from the green, and inquires the history of Jack and Elsie. Jack tells him of their humble means of livelihood. Elsie is still unmarried, "for though I'm a fool," quoths the jester, "there is a limit to my folly." The Lieutenant then outlines his plan to make her a bride for an hour, and as the bargain seems a sound one and money is scarce, the two agree to the subterfuge, and Elsie is led into the Tower cell, blindfolded, to be wedded to Fairfax. Jack Point meanwhile tries on the officer some of his best conundrums and his incorrigible talent for repartee.

Shortly after this Phoebe wheedles the keys of the

prison from Shadbolt, her "sour-faced admirer," and Fairfax is thus restored to liberty in the guise of a Yeoman of the Guard. Fairfax, of course, is taken for Leonard and complimented on his successful campaigns. And then there tolls the bell of St. Peter's. The crowd enter, the executioner's block is brought on, and the masked headsman takes his place. But when the Yeomen go to fetch the prisoner they find that the cell is empty, and that he has escaped. Shadbolt the jailer is arrested, and the people rush off in confusion, leaving Elsie insensible in the arms of her unknown husband, Fairfax. With this the curtain falls.

When it ascends once more on the same scene, the old housekeeper of the Tower, Dame Carruthers, chides the Yeomen on their failure both to keep and to re-capture Fairfax. Then Point and Shadbolt appear in very low spirits. For the Merry-man's dolefulness there is ample cause, and he himself laments how ridiculous it is that "a poor heart-broken man must needs be merry or he will be whipped." Shadbolt, envious of his companion's gifts, confesses to a secret yearning of his own to follow the jester's vocation, and the lugubrious fellow tells how deft and successful are his own delicate shafts of wit in the torture chamber and cells! Jack Point agrees, for a consideration, to teach Shadbolt "the rules that all family fools must observe if they love their profession." The consideration is that the jailor must declare that he shot Fairfax with an arquebus at night as he was attempting to swim over the Thames. The bargain is struck, and in a short time a shot is heard, and the jailor re-enters to declare that the escaped prisoner has been shot and drowned in the river. Fairfax himself has been lamenting that, although free from his fetters grim, he is still bound for good and ill to an unknown bride, a situation that leads up to the first of those delightful quartettes, "Strange Adventure." He meets Elsie, is attracted at once by her beauty, and learns the secret of her perplexity, though how can he proclaim his real self while he is still Leonard Meryll?

It is told us in a tuneful trio that "a man who would woo a fair maid should 'prentice himself to the trade

and study all day in methodical way how to flatter, cajole and persuade." Certainly Fairfax knows these arts much better than Point. Before the jester's eyes he begins to fascinate the girl with sweet words and tender caresses, and the utter disillusionment of poor Jack Point, a victim of the fickleness of womankind and outwitted in love, is reflected in that haunting number, "When a wooer goes a wooing." Events now race towards their end—an end that to two at least has all the joyous warmth of romance, but to the one pathetic figure in his motley the blackness of despair. Leonard hastens in with the belated reprieve, and Elsie soon learns with happiness that the gallant Yeoman who has captured her heart is, in truth, her own strangely-wed husband, Fairfax. For her the hardship of the stroller's life has passed. So also has it for the broken Merry-man. Sadly he kneels by the girl who has forsaken his arms for another's, gently fondles and kisses the hem of her dress, bestows on her the sign of his blessing, and in the last tremor of grief falls at her feet—dead!

### "THE GONDOLIERS."

*Produced December 7th, 1889.*

"THE GONDOLIERS" tells of the strange and romantic fortunes of two sturdy Republicans who are called upon jointly to assume the responsibilities of Monarchy. They are Marco and Guiseppe Palmieri, who ordinarily follow the calling of Venetian gondoliers, and who hold staunchly to the doctrine that "all men are equal." Kingship does, indeed, seem rather less abhorrent to their ideas when they are summoned to fill that exalted office themselves, but at the same time they do concede that neither their courtiers nor their menials are their inferiors in any degree. Indeed, when they rise in the scale of social importance they see that their subjects rise too, and perhaps it is not surprising that in this quaint court of Barataria are functionaries basking in the splendour of such titles as the Lord High Coachman and the Lord High Cook. Even in the heart

of the most democratic of mankind does the weakness for titles eternally linger !

It is in Venice, with a picturesque canal in the background, that the opera begins. The girls, their arms laden with roses white and roses red, are waiting for the most handsome and popular of all the gondolieri, who are coming to choose their brides from amongst this comely throng. So that, amidst such a bevy of loveliness, fate itself may select whom their partners shall be, the brothers decide to be blindfolded and to undertake to marry whichever two girls they catch. In this way Gianetta is claimed by Marco and Tessa by Guiseppe. And both were the very girls they wanted ! Singing and dancing like the lightsome, joyous people they are, the couples hasten to the altar without more ado.

A Spanish grandee, the Duke of Plaza-Toro, now arrives by gondola with his Duchess and his daughter, Casilda. With them are their suite—the drummer-lad Luiz. The Duke is a celebrated, cultivated, underrated nobleman of impecunious estate, shabby in attire but unquestionably gentle in breeding. He laments that his entry into the town has not been so imposing as his station requires, but the halberdiers and the band are mercenary people, and their services were not available without pre-payment in cash. Luiz is sent to announce the arrival of the ducal party to the Grand Inquisitor. While he is absent the Duke and Duchess tell their daughter the reason of their visit to Venice. She was married when only six months old to the infant heir to the Baratarian Throne. For State reasons the secret could not be told her before, and it seems that when her husband's father, then the reigning King, became a Wesleyan Methodist and was killed in an insurrection, the baby bridegroom was stolen by the Inquisition.

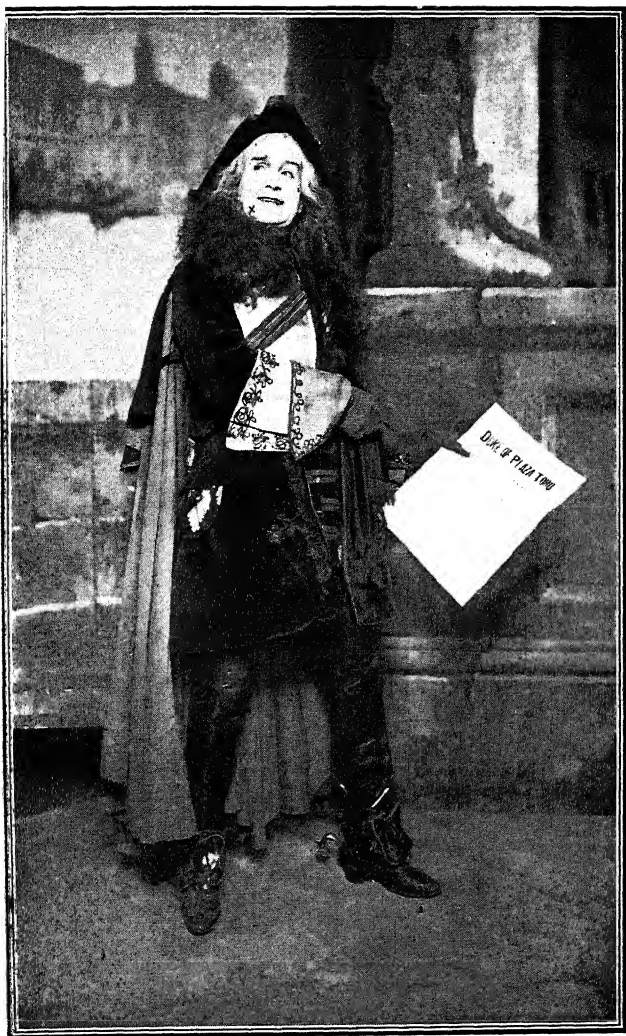
Casilda takes no pleasure in this sudden accession to Queenship. She has nothing to wear, and besides that, the family is penniless. That fact does not disturb the Duke. He has anticipated the problem already. Seeing that his social prestige is enormous, he is having himself floated as a company, the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Limited. He does not regard the proceeding as undignified. This Duke never did follow the fashions. He has made it his



business to lead them, and he recalls how "in enterprise of martial kind" when there was any fighting, he "led" his regiment from behind, because "he found it less exciting." Such was this unaffected, undetected, well-connected warrior, the Duke of Plaza-Toro.

Left alone, Luiz and Casilda show themselves to be secretly in love with each other, and they bemoan the miserable discovery that has ruined the sweet dreams of the future. The Duke and Duchess in the meanwhile have gone to pay their respects to the Grand Inquisitor. They return with this lugubrious personage, garbed all in black, and present to him the little lady who, as he says, is so unexpectedly called upon to assume the functions of Royalty. Unfortunately he cannot introduce her to her husband immediately. The King's identity is a little uncertain, though there is no probable, possible shadow of doubt that he is one of two men actually in the town and plying the modest but picturesque calling of the gondolier. It seems that, after the little prince was stolen, he was placed in the charge of a highly-respectable gondolier who had, nevertheless, an incurable weakness for drink, and who could never say which of the two children in his home was his own son and which was the prince. That matter can be solved by their nurse, Luiz's mother, who is being brought from the mountains and whose memory will be stimulated, if need be, by the persuasive methods of the Inquisition.

The gondoliers now return with their brides. Tessa tells in a beautiful number how, when a merry maiden marries, "every sound becomes a song, all is right and nothing's wrong." It was too sanguine a thought! The Grand Inquisitor, a gloomy figure amidst these festivities, finds the fact that Marco and Guiseppe have been married an extremely awkward one, and no less awkward their declaration that they are heart and soul Republicans. He does not tell them that one is married already—married to Casilda in infancy—but he does startle them by the news that one of them is a King. Sturdy Republicans as they are, they are loath to accept the idea of immediate abdication, and it is agreed that they shall leave for their country straightaway and, until the rightful heir is established, jointly hold the



Henry A. Lytton  
as  
The Duke of Plaza-Toro in "The Gondoliers."



reins of government. The Grand Inquisitor, for good reasons, will not let their wives accompany them, but the separation may not be a long one, and the four speculate on the thrills of being a "right-down regular Royal Queen." With a fond farewell the gondoliers then set sail for their distant dominion.

When in the second act we see the Pavilion of the Court of Barataria—there in one corner is the double-seated throne—we see also the happy workings of a "monarchy that's tempered with Republican equality." Courtiers and private soldiers, officers of high rank and menials of every degree, are enjoying themselves without any regard to social distinctions, and all are splendidly garbed. The Kings neither expect nor receive the deference due to their office, but they try to make themselves useful about the palace, whether by polishing their own crowns, running little errands for their Ministers, cleaning up in the kitchens, or deputising for sentries who go "in search of beer and beauty." It gives them, as Guiseppe sings, the gratifying feeling that their duty has been done, and in some measure it compensates for their two solitary grievances. One of these is that their subjects, while maintaining the legal fiction that they are one person, will not recognise that they have independent appetites. The other is—the absence of their wives. Marco is moved to describe the great specific for man's human happiness:—

"Take a pair of sparkling eyes,  
Hidden ever and anon,  
In a merciful eclipse.  
Do not heed their mild surprise,  
Having passed the Rubicon.  
Take a pair of rosy lips.  
Take a figure trimly planned—  
Such as admiration whets  
(Be particular in this);  
Take a tender little hand,  
Fringed with dainty fingerettes,  
Press it—in parenthesis—  
Take all these, you lucky man—  
Take and keep them if you can!"

No sooner has he finished than the contadine enter, having braved the seas at the risks of their lives, for

existence without their menfolk was dull and their womanly sense of curiosity strong. The re-union is celebrated by a boisterous dance (the cachucha). It is interrupted by the arrival of another unexpected visitor—the Grand Inquisitor.

The Grand Inquisitor, left alone with his *protégés*, first of all expresses his doubts whether the abolition of social distinctions is a workable theory. It had been tried before, and particularly by a jovial old King who, in moments of tipsy benevolence, promoted so many favourites to the top of the tree that "Lord Chancellors were cheap as sprats, and Bishops in their shovel hats were plentiful as tabby cats—in point of fact, too many." The plain conclusion was that "when everyone is somebodee, then no one's anybody." Then he tells them of the marriage of one of them in infancy. It is certainly an awkward predicament. Two men are the husbands of three wives! Marco, Guiseppe, Tessa and Gianetta try to solve the complicated plot.

Soon afterwards the ducal party arrive attired in the utmost magnificence. The Plaza-Toro issue has been successful, and the Duke proceeds to describe how his money-making devices include those of securing small titles and orders for Mayors and Recorders, and the Duchess's those of chaperoning dubious ladies into high-class society. The Duke ceremoniously receives the two gondoliers, but he has to take exception to the fact that his arrival has been marked by no royal salutes, no guard of honour, and no triumphal arches. They explain that their off-handed people would not tolerate the expense. His Grace thereupon advises them to impress their court with their importance, and to the strains of a delightful gavotte he gives the awkward fellows a lesson in the arts of deportment.

Luckily, the tangled plot is swiftly and very happily solved on the appearance of the old foster mother, who declares that the missing Prince is none other than Luiz. He promptly ascends the throne and claims the hand of Casilda, while Marco and Guiseppe, their days of regal splendour completed, are glad enough to return with their wives to beautiful Venice, there to become "once more gondolieri, both skilful and wary."

“UTOPIA, LIMITED.”

*Produced October 7th, 1893.*

“UTOPIA LIMITED” is the story—and a very diverting story it is—of a remote country that is desperately anxious to bring itself “up-to-date.” Utopia is somewhere in the Southern Pacific, and its inhabitants used to idle in easy, tropical langour amidst their picturesque palm groves. Idlers they were, that is to say, until they first heard of the wonders of England, for then it was that they determined that their land must be swiftly and completely Anglicised. The reformation was undertaken with the utmost zest. King Paramount’s eldest daughter, the beautiful Princess Zara, has spent five years in England and taken a high degree as a “Girton Girl.” She is due home once more at the time that the story of the opera begins, but already her people have heard of the wise and powerful country overseas, and already they have done much to remodel upon it their own manners, customs and forms of government.

Existence could never have been altogether dull in Utopia. \* It is ruled by a monarch, a despot only in theory, for the constitution is really that of a dynasty tempered by dynamite. This may seem a hard saying. The explanation of it is that the King, so far from being an autocrat, is watched over day and night by two Wise Men, and on his first lapse from political or social propriety he is to be denounced to the Public Exploder. It would then be this Court official’s duty to blow him up—he always has about him a few squibs and crackers—and doubtless he would discharge this function with greater alacrity because he is himself Heir-apparent. Clearly the King’s lot is not a happy one, and no less so because the Wise Men insist that all sorts of Royal scandals and indiscretions shall be written by himself, anonymously, for the spicy columns of the “Palace Peeper.” Generally his Majesty’s agents contrive to buy each edition up, but isolated copies do occasionally

get into unfriendly hands, and one of these contained his stinging little paragraph about his "goings-on" with the Royal Second Housemaid.

The King has two younger daughters, the Princesses Nekaya and Kalyba, who are being "finished" by a grave English governess, the Lady Sophy. Exceedingly modest and demure, with their hands folded and their eyes cast down, they are to be exhibited in the market place as patterns of what "from the English standpoint is looked upon as maidenly perfection." In particular they are to reveal the arts of courtship, showing how it is proper for the young lady to be coy and interestedly agitated in turn, and how she must always rehearse her emotions at home before the looking-glass. In the meanwhile the King, very deferential in manner, has an interview with his two Wise Men, Scaphio and Phantis. Notwithstanding that he seems a little hurt about the outrageous attacks on his morality which he has to write and publish at their command, he at least sees the irresistible humour of the strange situation, and he proceeds to sing a capital song about what a farce life is, alike when one's born, when one becomes married, and when one reaches the disillusioned years.

Zara now arrives from her long journey. She is escorted by Captain Fitzbattleaxe, together with four troopers of the 1st Life Guards, whose resplendent bearing immediately impress the maids of Utopia. She brings with her, moreover, six representatives of the principal causes which, she says, have tended to make England the powerful, happy and blameless country it is, and their gifts of reorganisation are to work a miracle in her father's realm. The King and his subjects are then and there introduced to these six "Flowers of Progress." One of them, Captain Fitzbattleaxe himself, is to re-model the Utopian Army. Sir Bailey Barre, Q.C., M.P., is a logician who, according to his brief, can demonstrate that black is white or that two and two make five, just as do the clever people of England. Then there is Lord Dramaleigh, a Lord High Chamberlain, who the Princess says is to "cleanse our court from moral stain and purify our stage." A County Councillor, Mr. Blushington, has come with a

mind packed with civic improvement schemes, and the wicked music-halls he also intends to purify. Mr. Goldbury is a company promoter. He floats anything from stupendous loans to foreign thrones to schemes for making peppermint-drops. Last of all comes Captain Sir Edward Corcoran, R.N., to show King Paramount how to run an invincible Navy.

Joyously do the inhabitants hail these "types of England's power, ye heaven-enlightened band." The King is impressed most of all with the idea of a "company limited." Gouldbury explains just what this means, and how one can start the biggest and rashest venture on a capital, say, of eighteen-pence, and yet be safe from liability. "If you succeed," he declares, "your profits are stupendous," "whereas "if you fail pop goes your eighteen-pence." It strikes the King as rather dishonest, but if it is good enough for England, the first commercial country in the world, it is good enough for Utopia. What is more, he decides to go down to posterity as the first Sovereign in Christendom who registered his Crown and State under the Joint Stock Companies' Act, 1862. It is with this brilliant scheme that the first act comes to a close.

The second act is set in the Throne Room of the Palace. Fitzbattleaxe is with the Princess Zara, and he is lamenting how a tenor in love, as he is with her, cannot in his singing do himself justice. The two then discuss the remarkable changes that have come about since the country determined to be Anglicised. The King, when he enters soon afterwards, wears the dress of a British Field-Marshal. He is to preside according to the articles of association, over the first statutory Cabinet Council of Utopia (Limited). For this gathering the "Flowers of Progress" also arrive, and after they have ranged their chairs round in Christy Minstrel fashion, the proceedings open with a rollicking song by the King. This is the chorus:—

" It really is surprising  
What a thorough Anglicising,  
We have brought about—Utopia's quite another land  
In her enterprising movements  
She is England—with improvements  
Which we dutifully offer to our motherland !"



Following the meeting comes the courtly ceremonial of the Drawing-Room. All the ladies are presented in due form to his Majesty. Then, after a beautiful unaccompanied chorus, the stage empties.

Scaphio and Phantis, dressed as judges in red and ermine robes, now enter to storm and rage over the new order of things. All their influence has gone. The sundry schemes they had for making provision for their old age are broken and bankrupt. Even the "Palace Peeper" is in a bad way, and as to the clothes they have imported to satisfy the cravings for the English fashions, their customers plead liability limited to a declared capital of eighteen-pence. The King, whom they used to bully to their hearts' content, is no longer a human being, but a corporation. Once he doffed his Crown respectfully before speaking to them, but now he dances about in lighthearted capers, telling them that all they can do is to put their grievances in writing before the Board of Utopia (Limited). The two call into their counsels the Public Exploder. Between them they work out a plot. By a revolution the Act of 1862 must be at all costs repealed.

Shortly after the trio have departed to scheme out the details, there is a delightful scene between Lord Dramaleigh and Mr. Goldbury, and the two coy Princesses, Nekaya and Kalyba. The "shrinking sensitiveness" of these young ladies is held by themselves to be most thoroughly English. So far from that, the men have to tell them, the girls in the country they come from are blithe, frank and healthy creatures who love the freshness of the open air and the strenuous exertions of sport, and who are "in every pure enjoyment wealthy." (Gilbert, by the way, wrote this opera in the early 'nineties.) Loyally does Goldbury chant this eulogy:—

"Go search the world and search the sea,  
Then come you home and sing with me,  
There's no such gold and no such pearl  
As a bright and beautiful English girl."

Nekaya and Kalyba are quickly converted to the idea that to be her natural self is woman's most winsome quality. Then follows an interlude between the Lady Sophy, whose primness is merely a cloak for ambition,

and the King. Compromising paragraphs in the society paper having been explained away, the two declare their mutual love, and soon they are caught by other couples in the act of dancing and kissing. No excuses are attempted and all engage in a wild festive dance.

Enter, now, the revolutionary band under the command of Scaphio, Phantis and the Public Exploder. They relate how the prosperity of Utopia has been brought to naught by the "Flowers of Progress." Suddenly the Princess Zara remembers that, in her great scheme of reform, the most essential element of all has been forgotten, and that was—party government! Introduce that bulwark and foundation of Britain's greatness and all will be well! Legislation will thus be brought to a standstill, and then there will be "sickness in plenty, endless lawsuits, crowded jails, interminable confusion in the Army and Navy, and, in short general and unexampled prosperity." The King decrees that party government and all its blessings shall be adopted, and the opera ends with a song of homage to a brave distant isle which Utopia is henceforward to imitate in her virtues, her charities and "her Parliamentary peculiarities."

"Great Britain is that monarchy sublime  
To which some add (but others do not) Ireland."

## A SAVOYARD BIBLIOGRAPHY.



The literature about Savoy Opera forms a regular library. A great deal of it has been contributed to newspapers and magazines. For the latter the reader should consult Poole's "Index to Periodical Literature," and its successor, "The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature." The following list contains the chief books about the Savoyards :—

## GILBERT.

W. S. GILBERT: By Edith A. Browne. *Stars of the Stage Series*. London: John Lane. 1907.

8vo.: pp. xii+96+15 plates, one of them showing Gilbert in a kilt as a (3rd) Gordon Highlander (1868-78): gives a list of Gilbert's plays. The operas are dealt with by themselves (pp. 55-84). There is a photograph of H. A. Lytton in "Patience" (facing p. 58).

SIR WILLIAM S. GILBERT: A study in modern satire: a handbook on Gilbert and the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. By Isaac Goldberg, M.A., Ph.D. (Harvard). Boston: Stratford Publishing Co., 1913.

8vo. pp. 156. The operas are discussed pp. 83-146. "The character of Pooh-Bah is perhaps the greatest single creation of Gilbert's."

RECOLLECTIONS OF GILBERT. By G. W. Smalley. *McClure's Magazine* (January 1903), xx, 302-304.

REAL CONVERSATION WITH GILBERT. By William Archer. *Critic*, New York (September 1901), xxxix, 240-240.

Mr. Archer's article on Gilbert as a dramatist in the *St. James's Magazine*, London, in 1881 (xlix, 287), was one of the first critical appreciations of Gilbert on a big scale.

GILBERT'S HUMOUR. By Max Beerbohm. *Saturday Review*, xcvi, 619; xcix, 696.

THE GENIUS OF GILBERT. *Blackwood's Magazine* (July 1911), cxcix, 121-128.

THE ENGLISH ARISTOPHANES. By Walter Sichel. *Fortnightly Review* (October 1911), xciv, 681-704.

THE LIBRETTOS OF W. S. GILBERT. By G. H. Powell. *Temple Bar*, cxxv, 36.

MR. GILBERT AS A LIBRETTIST. By J. M. Bulloch. *Evening Gazette*, Aberdeen (June 16, 17, 1890).

This was originally an address delivered to the Aberdeen University Literary Society, November 16, 1888. J. M. Bulloch also dealt with "The Pretty Wit of Mr. Gilbert" in the *Sketch*, June 18, 1898; "Mr. Gilbert's Majority as a Savoyard," in the *Sketch*, Sept. 9, 1898; and "The Work of W. S. Gilbert," illustrated in the *Bookbuyer*, New York, January, 1899.

GILBERT'S PROFITS FROM LIBRETTO. By G. Middleton. *Bookman*, New York (October, 1908) xxviii, 116-123.

SIR W. S. GILBERT. Leading article and biography in *The Times*, May 30, 1911, pp. 11-12.

PORTRAITS. Ten reproductions are inventoried in the *A.L.A. Portrait Index* (Washington, 1908: p. 378), including those by Rudolf Lehman and "Spy" in *Vanity Fair* (1881: xiii., plate 13.)

## SULLIVAN:

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN, HIS LIFE AND MUSIC. By B. W. Findon, London: James Nisbet and Company, 1904.

8vo. pp. viii+214+[2]: portrait of Sullivan. Dedicated to Mr. Findon's aunt, Mary Clementina Sullivan, 1811-82, mother of Sir Arthur. List of Sullivan's works (pp. 204-214): section specially devoted to the Savoy Opera (pp. 94-126.) This book was reprinted by Sisley's, Ltd. [1908] as "Sir Arthur Sullivan and his Operas."

SULLIVAN. By Sir George Grove. *Dictionary of Music* (1908, iv, 743-747.)

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN: Life story, letters, and reminiscences. By Arthur Lawrence; with critique by B. W. Findon; and bibliography by W. Bendall, London: James Bowden, 1899.

8vo. pp. xvi+360+11 plates+[8]. There are 19 illustrations, showing Sullivan at the ages of 12, 15, 25, 44, 52, and 57, with eight facsimiles of letters or scores. M. Findon's critique occupies pp. 288-326 and the bibliography, pp. 327-360.

SOUVENIR OF SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN, Mus. Doc., M.V.O.; a brief sketch of his life. By Walter J. Wells, London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1901.

8vo. pp. viii+106 with 49 illustrations. Contains "Sullivan and Gilbert" (pp. 15-31): "D'Oyly Carte" (pp. 32-46): "American Success" (pp. 47-54). List of his works (pp. 98-104).

ARTHUR SULLIVAN. By H. Saxe Wyndham. London: George Bell and Sons, 1903.

8vo. pp. x+80, with eight illustrations. Dedicated "to my wife through whose skill as a musician the never ending delights of Sullivan's music were first unfolded to me." One of Bell's Miniature Series of Musicians.

SULLIVAN. By H. Saxe Wyndham. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1926.

A biography of the composer and his work in and apart from the opera.

PORTRAITS. Twenty-one reproductions are inventoried in the *A.L.A. Portrait Index* (Washington, 1908: p. 1405 including those by Millais and by "Ape" in *Vanity Fair* (1874: vi, plate 81).

## CARTE.

The starting of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas: a letter written by R. D'Oyly Carte in 1877 to "My Lord" (unnamed), apropos of a proposal to form a small company to produce the operas. Printed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 1, 1907.

The petition by the Savoy Theatre and Operas, Ltd., and Reduced, for the approval of the Court to the reduction of the capital from £75,000 to £41,350 was heard before Mr. Justice Walton, August 26, 1903 (*Times*, August 27). This led to a very interesting letter from Gilbert in the *Times* (Aug. 28) and one in the *Telegraph* by Mrs. Carte (Aug. 29).

PORTRAITS. Four reproductions are Inventoried in the *A.L.A. Portrait Index* (Washington, 1908: p. 259), including that by "Spy" in *Vanity Fair* (1891: xxiii, plate 498).

## THE SAVOY OPERAS.

GILBERT, SULLIVAN, AND D'OYLY CARTE: Reminiscences of the Savoy and the Savoyards. By François Cellier and Cunningham Bridgeman. London: Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1914.

8vo. pp. xxiv+443: with 63 portraits and other illustrations and six facsimile letters; and a complete set of casts at the Savoy (pp. 425-435). The collaboration between Mr. Cellier and Mr. Bridgeman (pp. 3-163) was ended by the former's death, January 5, 1914. The rest of the book (pp. 164-422) was done by Mr. Bridgeman.

THE SAVOY OPERA AND THE SAVOYARDS. By Percy Fitzgerald, M.A., and S.A.; with six illustrations. London: Chatto and Windus, 1894.

8vo. pp. xvi+248. Most of the illustrations are pen and ink drawings.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERA: a history and a comment. By H. M. Walbrook: with a foreword by Sir Henry Wood. London: F. V. White and Co., Ltd., 1920.

8vo. pp. 155+[3]+4 plates, including two drawings by H. M. Bateman and a reproduction of the Sullivan Memorial in the Victoria Embankment Gardens; with 42 pen-and-ink sketches in the text: Short bibliography (p. 155).

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN: A Critical Appreciation. By A. H. Godwin; with an introduction by G. K. Chesterton. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1926.

8vo. pp. xx + 300, with composite photo of Gilbert and Sullivan. An estimate of the operas and a survey of the influences directing their collators dealt with as a semi-critical analysis by the editor of the *Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN JOTTINGS. By Shelford Walsh [Harrogate?] coach to the principal operatic societies in the United Kingdom [1903].

16 mo.: pp. 24+cover. Contains little stories about the operas. Price 4d.

SAVOYARDS ON TOUR: a description of the various companies on the road. *Sketch*, June 13, 1894.

SAVOYARD DINNER, given by the O.P. Club in the Hotel Cecil, December 30, 1906.

Gilbert's historical speech on this occasion was printed verbatim in the *Daily Telegraph*, December 31, 1906.

GILBERT AND SULLIVAN JOURNAL. London: Of all booksellers. 2s. 3d. annually.

A quarterly publication dealing exclusively with the operas from many angles.

## BARRINGTON.

RUTLAND BARRINGTON: a record of thirty-five years' experience on the English stage. By Himself; with a preface by Sir William S. Gilbert. London: Grant Richards, 1908.

8vo. pp. 870+31 illustrations and coloured portrait on the cover. Printed at Plymouth. Dedicated to "My good friend, Mrs. D'Oyly Carte." The Savoy is dealt with pp. 25-86.

MORE RUTLAND BARRINGTON. By Himself. London: Grant Richards, 1911.

8vo. pp. 233+[1]+15 illustrations, including one of H. A. Lytton as the Pirate King. Printed in Edinburgh.

GROSSMITH.

A SOCIETY CLOWN: Reminiscences. By George Grossmith. Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1888.

8vo. pp. iv+182. Forming vol. 31 of Arrowsmith's Bristol Library. Chapter on Gilbert and Sullivan pp. 91-125. In "Piano and I" (1910), he describes (pp. 11-18) why he left the Savoy. See also "The Diary of Nobody" (1892).

LYTTON.

MEMORIES OF A MERRYMAN. By H. A. Lytton. *Graphic*, Nov. 19, 26; Dec. 3, 10, 17, 1921.

This consists of some extracts from the present volume.



# LONDON PRODUCTIONS

## OF

### THE SAVOY OPERAS.

Opera.	Theatre.	Produced.	Withdrawn.	Per.
Trial by Jury	Royalty	Mar. 25, 1875	Dec. 18, 1875	—
The Sorcerer	Opera			
	Comique	Nov. 17, 1877	May 22, 1878	175
„	Savoy	Oct. 11, 1884	Mar. 12, 1885	150
„	„	Sep. 22, 1898	Dec. 31, 1898	102
H.M.S.	Opera			
Pinafore	Comique	May 25, 1878	Feb. 20, 1880	} 700
„	„	Dec. 16, 1879	Mar. 20, 1880	
„	Savoy	Nov. 12, 1887	Mar. 10, 1888	120
„	„	June 6, 1889	Nov. 25, 1889	174
„	„	July 14, 1908	Repertory	
			Season	61
The Pirates of Penzance	Opera			
	Comique	Apl. 3, 1880	Apl. 2, 1881	363
„	Savoy	Mar. 17, 1888	June 6, 1888	80
„	„	June 30, 1900	Nov. 3, 1900	127
„	„	Dec. 1, 1909	Repertory	
			Season	43
Patience	Opera			
	Comique	Apl. 23, 1881	Oct. 8, 1881	170
„	Savoy	Oct. 10, 1881	Nov. 22, 1882	448
„	„	Nov. 7, 1900	Apl. 20, 1901	150
„	„	Apl. 4, 1907	Repertory	
			Season	51
Iolanthe	Savoy	Nov. 25, 1882	Jan. 1, 1884	398
„	„	Dec. 7, 1901	Mar. 29, 1902	113
„	„	June 11, 1907	Repertory	
			Season	42
„	„	Oct. 19, 1908	„	38

*THE SECRETS OF A SAVOYARD* 191

Opera.	Theatre.	Produced.	Withdrawn.?	Per.
Princess Ida	Savoy	Jan. 5, 1884	Oct. 9, 1884	246
The Mikado	„	Mar. 14, 1885	Jan. 19, 1887	672
„	„	Jan. 7, 1888	Sept. 29, 1888	116
„	„	Nov. 6, 1895	Mar. 4, 1896	127
„	„	July 11, 1896	Feb. 17, 1897	226
„	„	Apl. 28, 1908	Repertory Season	142
Ruddigore	Savoy	Jan. 22, 1887	Nov. 5, 1887	288
The Yeomen of the Guard	Savoy	Oct. 3, 1888	Nov. 30, 1889	423
„	„	May 5, 1897	Nov. 20, 1897	186
„	„	Dec. 8, 1906	Repertory	90
„	„	Mar. 1, 1909	„	28
The Gondo- liers	Savoy	Dec. 7, 1889	June 20, 1891	554
„	„	Mar. 22, 1898	May 11, 1898	62
„	„	July 18, 1898	Sept. 17, 1898	63
„	„	Jan. 22, 1907	Repertory Season	76
„	„	Jan. 18, 1909	„	22

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